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世界一かんたんなヒロインの攻略（おと）しかた

The world's easiest
way to drop a heroine in love.

ファンタジア文庫

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（ふふふ、よく聞いて！ 今日から、姫野実衣奈攻略作戦を開始するよ！）
……は？
ミーナ
姫野実衣奈の思念体で“素”の人格。とある事故をきっかけに現れ、乙綺だけが認識し会話をすることが出来る。実体に戻るため乙綺と共にヒロイン攻略作戦に乗り出すのだが……？
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CHARACTER

「乙綺にぃ、お昼ご飯一緒に食べよ～」

月宮陽茉里

中等部の三年で、乙綺にとっては中学時代の友人兼後輩。乙綺を兄のように慕っており、わざわざ高等部の教室にまで訪ねてくるなど今でも関係は良好。

「乙綺さぁ…、そんなにヒメのこと好きなの？」

椎名凛音

乙綺の隣の家に住む世話焼き系幼馴染。テニス部所属で、明るい性格の健康的な美少女。男子からの人気も高いが、本人は何かと乙綺のことを気にかけていて……？

「さ、早乙女くん？　わ、わ、私になにか用、かな？」

姫野実衣奈

バドミントン全国4位で学業も優秀という文武両道、才色兼備の美少女。人当たりの良い性格から男女問わずに人気があり、乙綺の想い人でもある。誰にも言えない秘密があるとか……？

「マジか……姫野実衣奈と会話しちまったぜ……」

早乙女乙綺

憧れのヒロイン・姫野実衣奈に想いを寄せるモブ気質の高校一年生。しかし困っている人を見過ごせなかったり、誰にでも優しいなど、ミーナいわく「鉄感系主人公」の素質ありとのこと。

（――それでね！　そのヒロインのフラグの立て方が凄く特殊なの！　別ヒロインの個別ルートに入ってから、一度ルート変更しなきゃならなくてさぁ～。私も攻略に苦労したんだぁ！

って、乙綺くん聞いてる!?）

見たな。

間を

実感する。

が続けば……。

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Prologue: Opening

Reflected in my eyes, the girl was shining.
(We're getting close to the train station.)
She possessed snow white skin like she had been standing in a snowstorm.
(It's still the beginning of September, so I think it's a bit early to think about snow.)
'Won't she just melt away if I touch her?' are the worries filling me, as she looked like an ice sculpture.
(I'm properly training my body at my club, and right now, my heart is burning up more than anything!)
A commoner like me had no way of knowing what the wise girl thought, or what she wished for.
(Since we're about to go shopping for something she loves, her heart must be racing right about now.)
…Ahh, so noisy. Can you not get in between my quality time with Himeno Miina?
(I'm also Himeno Miina, okay! I'm the real deal, remember!?)
Inside the train, my gaze was entrapped by the dignified Himeno Miina sitting in the train wagon next to mine. In the corner of my view, there stood another individual that looked identical to Himeno Miina, crossing her arms with a pout on her face. However, unlike the regular Himeno Miina, she was transparent.
(What's that gaze like you're looking at a ghost for?)
Her skin resembled see-through melted ice, so transparent it seemed.
(T-That's much better than some white skin, right?)
She seemed to be giving off a heat that made me worried I might burn my hand if I dared to touch her.
(That's the proof that I have blood running through my veins. Human kindness and all, you know?)
What this idiotic girl was thinking, and what she wished for, it was all too clear to me. After all, her words and honest feelings were directly reaching my ears.
(What do you mean idiotic, huh?)
Can you explain to me why exactly she can hear my own thoughts as well!?
She put both her hands on her hips, approaching me. Y-You're too close! Your breath will hit me! My heart started to race faster, and I could feel the individual beats increasing drastically.

(Ah, eh, ahh!? W-What is this…Awawawa~!)
Almost like she had reacted to my racing heart, the girl's skin looked neither snow white nor transparent, but rather like the red leaves during the fall.
(Itsuki-kun, you're too nervous! C-C-Calm down!)
Y-Y-You're the one at fault for suddenly getting closer like that, Miena!
(W-Well, you got nervous because of me, so it can't be helped, I guess!)
N-No, I didn't! I was just entranced by Himeno Miina's lovely profile, not because of you, Miena!
(Hmpf, what's so lovely about that stupid face…)
From the day she enrolled, she always got perfect grades during every exam, so she's not stupid at all.
(But I'm the same as her!)
That's right, she is the same. The Himeno Miina sitting next to me with her back stretched tall and dignified, looking as beautiful as always, and the Miena in front of me who was bawling and complaining, are exactly the same. Although I really don't want to admit it.
(Ah, over here! We're getting off at this station! Come on, hurry up!)
Once we reached a certain station, Miena's eyes lit up as she urged me to get off the train. I was chasing the Himeno Miina I had unrequited feelings for, and the transparent Miena. How did this even happen…I was spending my average high school days in peace, and yet…The transparent girl that shared my own heartbeat…Miena…had appeared before me around two days ago. Two days ago on the day of the opening ceremony, this odd shared life between me, Saotome Itsuki, and Miena had begun.
Ahhhh! Seriously, how did things end up like this!?

Chapter 1: Conquering Himeno with the Help of Himeno

“Himeno Miina, you have achieved the great achievement of reaching the 4th place in the National High School Comprehensive Girls Badminton Tournament, and you will be given the adequate honor.”
This was the opening ceremony of the second term in my first year at high school. The ventilation windows of the gym hall were half opened, making you feel the late summer season happening outside, with a cat’s meowing voice and the sluggish heat tickling my body. Surrounded by tanned classmates, I was gazing up at Himeno Miina, who stood on the stage, as well as all the other people who I didn’t care about.
Even during summer break, I was just staying in my room all day, so I kept my healthy skin color. If this was Reversi, then I would be overwhelmed by all these normie bastards around me, burning up to turn into crispy bread.
“Seems like your beloved princess was diligently studying over summer break. What were you doing, Itsuki?” The crispy bastard behind me, Nakagawa Shouma, whispered these words to me in a voice that quickly vanished in this large hall, only reaching my ears.
“Nothing happened at my end, I was just enjoying my days like I usually would. Was pretty fulfilling.”
“You’re keeping as much of a philosophic view as always, Itsuki. It’ll just end up rotten by the time you become an adult, you know? Huehue.”
Shouma was poking fun at me, but he’s not a normie himself.
He’s the type of person who admires normies and aspires to be one, eventually ending up as a fake normie. In order to be popular with the girls, he constantly checks out techniques and fashion, even popular date books thanks to the help of various magazines.
“Still, she’s as cute as ever, that Himeno Miina.”
Befitting the kind of prim and proper idol Himeno Miina, she possessed natural medium hair. He’s vastly different from Shouma, who uses wax and other hairstyling products to put attention to his hair. She at least must be putting attention to her care for it, as her black-purple hair shone as the light reflected it. The flower accessory on her hair fit her as well as it always had.
“Hey now, Itsuki. Your voice is leaking out. If the other guys hear you, they’ll go on a hunt. You better be careful.”

She is the most popular girl at the private Koujoukan High that we are attending. She's my heroine, Himeno Miina. Unlike me, who's been attending this school conglomerate, she enrolled here during her first year of high school. Putting her cute looks and athletic abilities together, adding the top-ranking grades she's had since day one, and all her other talents, she's reached something like an idol status even during the first school term. As a result of this, a lot of guys had their eyes set on her.
"No problem there, chief. It's not like I got any chance with her."
Atop the stage, Himeno Miina was gracefully accepting her prize. Compare her, being rewarded on stage, only strengthening her idol status, to the side character me that could merely look up at her. Himeno Miina and I are part of two different stories. With these thoughts in my mind, I could only watch the awe-inspiring scenery up on the stage with a gaze of respect and devotion.
The opening ceremony ended, and right as I went my average daily life, heading to the classroom—
"Kyaaaaa!"
I was climbing up the stairs with heavy steps, when a girl suddenly came falling down from above.
"Woah!?"
I immediately caught the girl soaring down at me, but the impact pushed us both down. If I wasn't there to intercept her fall, her head would have most likely slammed into the resting space of the stairs. I ended up falling backwards on my back, the girl's gentle heaviness landing on my stomach.
For a guy with a boring ass daily life, that sure was a sudden romcom development, alright.
I tried to get a better look at the girl, but my head was covered with something like paper, so black was all I could see. I took off the paper, and ran my eyes along the words. This paper is…a testimonial? Must belong to a girl, as the name written on it is…Ah.
"Awawawawa!"
Awawawawa!
A girl's voice overlapped with the voice inside of my chest. The written name on the testimonial was none other than Himeno Miina. That means, the girl who is currently resting on my stomach…**Gulp**. **Ba-dump, ba-dump, ba-dump**. The sound of me swallowing raised the curtains on my heartbeat accelerating to a painful level, reaching something comparable to drums. I frantically moved away from the girl, and looked up at her in terror.
…Without a doubt, it was Himeno Miina. She was the same classmate of mine that I thought of during my way to school, and my number one heroine in life.
"Ahhhh, um…a-are you…are you okay!?"
That question was probably better off directed at me instead, looking at my reaction.

“I’m much more worried about you! I’m sorry, this is all my fault…”
“I-I-I’m totally fine! Super fine! The bestest of fine!” I stood up on wobbly feet to show off that fact, failing miserably.
Even now, the pain in my body was greatly overwhelmed by the tension and nervousness filling my body as I stood in front of the girl. I never once talked to Himeno Miina. Of course, I know her very well, but I doubt she even knew I existed until now. Royalty and a commoner just have nothing in common.
“You really saved me. Even ignoring your own danger, protecting me like that…I have no words that can express how thankful I feel. I am however worried about your health, so let’s go to the infirmary.”
“Ah, n-no! I-I-I’m fine! No need to worry about me!”
“Maybe you are hurt somewhere? Please wait here for a moment, I will call for the nurse.”
“I-I really am okay!”
—Almost as if to run away from that place, I hurriedly dashed up the stairs.
“Haaa…huff…Seriously…I actually talked with that Himeno Miina…I can’t believe it!”
I’ve always dreamed of talking with her. In my fantasies, that was pretty much a daily occurrence, but now it actually happened in reality, not to mention for the first time ever.
“Ahhh, she was so soft…Maybe the fabric of a girl’s uniform is different from the boys? She smelled really nice as well, and this squishy feeling on my stomach…”
For a brief moment, I enjoyed the aftertaste of that previous situation.
(Hey, hey! Are you really okay!? Maybe you should head to the hospital after all?)
Hm!? What?! I can hear someone’s voice. Don’t just interrupt me enjoying the aftertaste a bit longer! Who are you!? I looked around, but couldn’t find anybody…Maybe it was Himeno Miina? She might have chased after me out of worry. I felt an odd tension and also excitement rise up inside of me, when I slowly turned around. Standing there was—
“H-Himeno-san!?”
None other than Himeno Miina, who gave me a worried look. The surroundings were colored with a faint midday light, together with the warm heat resulting from this, which also resembled some kind of aura she was giving off.
(Are you hurt anywhere? You sure you’re okay?)
“I-I’m totally fine, yesh!”
(Y-You don’t seem okay…at all…What is going on…with my heart…)
…Hm? I wonder why, it feels like she’s acting off compared to just now.
When I got a closer look at her, something about her was weird. My heroine Himeno Miina has the greatest presence at this school. She stands out even from afar, even to people who aren’t head over heels for her like me. And yet, the girl in front of me right now seemed so faint, almost non-existent.

Almost like she’s there, but also not there, an existence between two worlds.
…Also, isn’t she see-through? She totally is see-through! I mean, I can see the stairs right through her body! I totally see the faces of the students coming up the stairs right now. Hold on a damn second! Isn’t that Himeno Miina as well over there!? I can see Himeno Miina coming up the stairs through the transparent body of the Himeno Miina in front of me. What am I even saying?
“Ahh, perfect, you were still here. I’m relieved you’re healthy enough to run like that, but I do think you should probably get checked out at the hospital, you know?” After coming up the stairs, Himeno Miina saw me, and gave me a few more words of kindness.
“H-H-Himeno-san…?”
The reason for my confusion wasn’t solely because I was talking with the girl I always admired.
“Oh? You know about me?”
(Huh? You know me?)
Because of my question, both Himeno Miinas responded. One responded with a polite voice, and the other tilted her head as she drifted in the air…
Drifting in the air!? Is she some ghost? A hallucination? Either way is just as bad, so I have to run away for now!
(Ah, hey! Why are you running away!?)
Just normally talking with Himeno Miina makes my heart feel like it was going to burst, so of course I would run away when encountering some supernatural phenomenon like this! I abruptly decided to seek refuge in my classroom…
“Hey now, Saotome, you’re late. Homeroom already started, so take a seat.”
The second I entered the classroom, my female homeroom teacher gave me a lecture. Oh yeah, it was already time for homeroom, right. Because of this irregular event befalling me, I completely awakened to a sense of relief in this familiar event.
(Hey, why do you keep running away?)
“Bfffft?!”
Right as I took a seat the furthest back in the classroom, right next to the windows, the transparent girl’s head popped up right next to mine.
“Hey, Saotome, keep it quiet back there.”
I was warned yet again, but I really wish she’d complain at the ghost next to me again! …So wait, she can’t even see her? I carefully glanced over at the transparent girl, who had her arms crossed, giving me a stern gaze.
(I simply wanted to give you my gratitude…)
Oh man…I sure am tired, huh. The homeroom ended without me even paying much attention, which is why Shouma yet again poked fun at me.
“It’s rare for you to do stuff that makes you stand out, Itsuki. Something happened?”

“N-Nothing at all.” I glanced at the girl who sat on the window frame, and gave a vague response.
(So you’re Saotome Itsuki-kun, huh. You’re in my neighbouring class, right.)
I-Is she really Himeno Miina? Her voice and appearance are the exact same as the real one…except the fact that she’s transparent. N-No wait, her personality is also a bit…quite a lot different.
“What’s wrong, Itsuki? You’re staring out the window like crazy. I got my part-time job now, so I’m heading home first.”
“Y-Yeah…see you tomorrow.”
Out the window, huh…Guess Shouma can’t see that girl either, huh.
“Yo, OtsuOtsu, don’t forget your homework, alright~”
“OtsuOtsu-kun, laterz~”
Some classmates of mine were throwing words at me that probably were meant as an insult, and left the classroom. I guess they can’t see the girl as well. Also, stop calling me that way.
(OtsuOtsu-kun, huh. That’s kinda cute, can I call you that way as well?)
The day the girl calls me OtsuOtsu will be the day I will never leave my house again. My name is Saotome Itsuki, I don’t know Gestaltzerfall caused you to come up with that kind of name. You’re the strange ones[1] here.
(Ehh? Even though it’s so cute…)
……Huh? Right now, I didn’t even say anything. I was just saying that in my mind, right?
(Hey hey, just forget about that for now. A cute girl is approaching you, you know?)
The influx of too much information utterly had my brain shut down, I saw a familiar girl approach my seat.
“Itsuki~ I was invited out to karaoke by some friends. Wanna join?” She’s my classmate Shiina Rion, and her long brown-beige hair swayed as she took a peek at my face.
“I ain’t going.”
I’m going home right now to get some rest. Need to refresh my brain.
“Eh, why?”
So that I get rid of this confusing phenomenon going on right now!
“If I don’t want to go, then I don’t, alright. See you~”
That damn childhood friend of mine, not caring about the people around us, always inviting me out with the other normies.
(C-C-Childhood friend?!)
Her long hair reached all the way down near her waist. She’s part of the tennis club, so her body was slender and well-built. As a result of that, she’s fairly popular with the guys in class, which of course earns me a lot of deathly stares whenever she talks to me. Must be her friends who got it out for me.
“Ah, Itsuki~ Wait a second! Ahh, jeez! Just don’t forget your homework tomorrow, alright!”

If it was only me who was in the crossfire, then I wouldn't mind. But, I don't want Rion to suffer because of some weird rumours going around. She's not a bad person at all after all. If anything, since we live next to each other, we've known each other since we were small children, so she's like a family to me. Can't allow my family to get hurt.
(A childhood friend, how nice! …Still, you're no joke, just rejecting an invitation from a friend like that…)
I ignored the hallucination in my head, and after a few minutes of walking, a certain terrifying word popped up in the back of my head. Sweat started pouring down from my forehead.
"Home…work?"
That's what the other mob classmates, or mobmates for short, and even Rion told me…Oh yeah, tomorrow is the deadline to hand in my summer homework, I gotta hurry home!
(Huh~ You sure are keeping your room clean.)
I rushed home, and temporarily ignored this whole supernatural phenomenon. There is something I need to devote myself to right now.
(Wazzat?)
Summer homework.
(Eh? You still haven't finished it? Should I help you then?)
Zip it, don't need your help. Why would some hallucination even help me? How ridiculous, really. Though, it is odd. Even though I can clearly see this hallucination right in front of me, and yet my head doesn't hurt in the slightest. If anything, my thoughts are as clear as ever, it's honestly terrifying.
"Right now, homework comes first."
If I focus on it, I should be able to finish it in two hours. Finishing your summer homework during the break is so unsophisticated.
(It's not~ Why didn't you just chip away at it during summer break?)
Imma just ignore that voice. I can't lose my focus because of some weird hallucinatory voice. Just leave me alone for now…
(Ah, your answer here to the kanji question is wrong. The radical □ for □□[2] is written with □[3], not □. Otherwise it'll be □[4].)
…Ah, she's right. I often make that mistake, gotta be more careful. The hallucination had planted down next to me without me even realizing it, and pointed at the summer homework in front of me.
"……"
Hold on, why is a hallucination pointing out my mistakes!? Eh? You serious? What is this hallucination? My supporting character?
(Ah! You made another mistake. That choice here is U. A is a bait.)
"……"
(The next answer is wrong as well. During the first term, the teacher pointed out that this was a place easy to get wrong, and mentioned it several times during class, remember?)
"……"

Damn it! To hell with it all! Why is some random hallucination complaining at me like that! I wanna cry. Not to mention that she kept going on with pointing out my mistakes, while I worked through the homework to finish it. I wonder why, but even though I finished it faster than usual, the stress is even bigger than ever.
“Ahhh, finally done. Now I’m free.”
(You’re exaggerating. You just finished the last part of your summer homework that was long overdue. Also, I feel like your studying parameters are fairly low…)
Parameters? Did I just get dissed by some hallucination? Then again, I barely avoided failing grades in math and stuff so I can’t exactly talk back. Whatever, good things happened today as well, even if this hallucination is trying hard to make me forget about it.
“I sure was lucky today.”
(Lucky? Did something good happen?)
It’s not just something good. I can just remember my beloved Himeno Miina’s adorable face! I got to see it up close like that, not to mention our bodies ended up touching.
(Awawawa! E-Even if you suddenly say that…S-So embarrassing…)
As I was remembering Himeno Miina’s cute face, the hallucination jumped into my field of view, her face beet red as she waved her hands frantically. Her face looked identical to the same one I was just fantasizing about…Why are you ending up flustered now?
(W-Well, it doesn’t feel bad for me, so…T-Thanks.)
“And why are you thanking me now?!” I subconsciously threw in a retort. Still, looking at her up close like this, she really looks exactly like Himeno Miina.
(W-What?)
A glimmer of caution flamed up in her eyes, as she used her index finger to twirl around her hair. M-Maybe I should try touching her…It’s just a hallucination, so there won’t be any problem, right…? I stretched out my arm, reaching for the back of her hand.
(Hya! W-What are you doing!?)
She tried to brush away my own hand, but I felt no pain. After all, her hand passed right through mine, with no contact happening. She just brushed her hand through the air.
(Urk!)
She suddenly started tearing up, letting out a groan. As for me, I realized that she was undoubtedly and indisputably an unrealistic illusion of an existence. I must be tired after all…Even though I’m not even working hard for my studies or club, heh…Alright, time to take a bath and get all clean for now. I headed to the changing room down on the first floor, and entered the bath, when—
(Kyaaaaaaaaa!)

A shriek high enough to pierce my eardrums rang out. It’s no big deal, it’s just the scream of some hallucination. Why is she following me even for my bath scene? I should be the one screaming, okay?

(Heyyy, what are you doing…What should I do…Seeing your naked body like this, it feels like we're taking a bath together…Just looking at you makes me feel embarrassed. H-Hide that, will you…)
You say that, and yet you're glancing at me from between the fingers you're using to cover your face.
"Still, that shriek just now really sounded like Himeno Miina's. Since I heard her scream just today, I can easily deduce that. After washing off my body, I hopped into the bathtub, and healed my exhausted body and mind. The scent of the bath salt resembled the smell of herbs as it tickled my nose, allowing me to think more rationally…Alright! I'll head to bed early today, and return to my usual daily life, that's the best.
Since fatigue in both body and mind plagued me, as soon as I stepped out of the bath, I laid in my bath.
(You must be exhausted today, huh. I'll explain everything tomorrow, so good night.)
"……"
Ahh, I'm really down today. Rather than that incident with the Himeno Miina, this hallucination plaguing me is much more exhausting. Tomorrow, she'll surely be gone. At the same time as I would be happy about that, I'd also feel sad……and with these thoughts in mind, I quickly fell asleep.
(Heyho! It's morning! You'll end up laaaate!)
So annoying first thing in the morning…
"Yaaaawwwnn…What time do you think it is? My alarm didn't even ring yet…" With a yawn and still drowsy eyes, I checked the time. "Are you serious, it's 6am."
Since I always get up at 7am, I can still sleep for another hour. Who came to wake me up like this? Are you serious?
(And? Feeling more fresh now?)
H-H-Himeno-san!? Why are you in my room!? I jumped up in shock, realizing that Himeno Miina stood next to my bed, giving me a worried gaze…Ah, that's right. In the end, that hallucination didn't disappear. I thought that maybe a bit of sleep would let my brain relax, and banish this hallucination from my head, but I guess that didn't happen.
(Rather than you being exhausted, I'm more worried about your body. Does your back hurt?)
Almost like she was trying to nurse my back right after I got up, as she put her palm on my back. However, this hand passed right through me, not even allowing me to feel her warmth. However, instead of that, I felt a comfortable and cozy kindness from the hallucination instead.
—My body is feeling great, to be honest. The real problem is this hallucination. Related to this ghost girl in front of me, I found one possible explanation from yesterday's incidents. It sounds very unlikely, and I truly don't want to believe in this being the case, but…

(Hmm? So you realized I'm around? Well, that makes sense. I've been interacting with you ever since yesterday, so of course you'd catch on. It's true I am—)
"Are you an imaginary friend that I created myself!?"
Right now, it was a bit past 6am in the morning. My voice loudly passed through my room, and silence returned.
(…Eh? Imaginary Friend? Isn't that…like a fabricated entity that acts as your friend when you feel alone? That's not it, I'm just me.)
The hallucination…No, my Imaginary Friend said so, breaking the silence.
(Like. I. Said! I'm not your imaginary friend or whatever!)
I couldn't believe myself. I thought I was able to differentiate reality and my own fantasies, and yet this is what happened. It seems like my fantasies that allowed me to run away from reality now got the better of me, and brought forth this imaginary friend of mine.
(You brought forth this imaginary…Wait, no! Don't just reach a conclusion all on your own!)
But, how did this happen? Now that it already came into existence, it can't be helped. Rather than wanting to remove this nuisance, I don't even know how to achieve that. I should probably try talking to this hallucination for now.
(Yup yup, that's a great mentality. Let's both introduce each other, shall we.)
"My name is Saotome Itsuki. I think you know enough about me that I don't need to introduce myself. I don't know if you're part of my unconscious mind or my superficial mind, but that's close enough, right?"
I've been feeling it since yesterday, but looking at how she can hear my thoughts, it must be something psychological.
(Not even close. As I said just now, I am me. Name's Himeno Miina, treat me well.)
The girl gave me a wink, and offered me her right hand for a handshake.
Ahh, I see, Himeno Miina, huh…No hold on, Himeno Miina!? Don't joke with me! I tried to brush away the hand she offered me, but was just met with empty air. If this was the real Himeno Miina, I would die to shake her hand, but the entity in front of me is nothing but a fake. You sure have guts calling yourself like my beloved Himeno Miina, let me tell you.
(Why are you so angry all of a sudden? I'm not joking around or anything like that.)
To think you'd just name yourself as Himeno Miina…Wait, hold on? Since this is a fabrication that came to life because of my own desires, then it's not that weird, actually. Rather, that's what I should have expected. It was always my dream to talk with Himeno Miina, and I constantly fantasize about it.
(Really? But, that's your dream? You're overexaggerating. If you wanted to talk with me that badly, you could have always called out to me at school.)

Don’t make it sound so simple, alright. Some trash like me has no right to talk to you.
(Don’t be like that! Just talking to me requires no special right or anything. At the very least, I wouldn’t hate it if someone like you talked to me!)
Even if you say that…But, that makes me feel a bit better. So, thanks.
(Yup! Also, it’s not ‘you’, it’s Himeno Miina. I’ll call you by your name as well. Saotome-kun? Itsuki-san? Or would you prefer OtsuOtsu-kun?)
What kind of romcom development nonsense is this now? Even though I’m all alone in this room, I can’t help but feel happy. Though, I don’t need the OtsuOtsu, so…Itsuki-kun, please. Don’t really like being called by my name, but it’s just a hallucination, a friend, so I guess it’s fine.
(Okaaay~ What do you want to call me then? The people at school usually just go with Hime.)
Yup, I know. That’s my network of information, alright. I’ve already memorized that fact. So then, I’ll go…with Miena[5].
(Eh? M-My given name? That’s a bit embarrassing, but…okay!)
She was fidgeting around bashfully, but I wasn’t off any better. I definitely couldn’t say something like that if this was the actual Himeno Miina. I would die. But, since this is just my fabricated Himeno Miina, there’s no problem.
(Fabricated, huh. So, you don’t think of me as the real Himeno Miina?)
Hell no I don’t. I saw the real Himeno Miina yesterday behind you. Not to mention…
(Not to mention?)
Your personality is totally different from the real Himeno Miina. You’re way less formal than her, and you give off this forceful aura. The real Himeno Miina is always calm, formal, and very polite.
(Calm, formal, and very polite…huh. Well, you’re right. That’s what it would seem like. After all, my usual behaviour and how I am right now are completely different after all…)
She doesn’t give off the vibe that you can just walk up and talk to her, not to mention that rather than her being my only heroine, she’s like everyone’s idol.
(I-I see…So then…Itsuki-kun, say…do you…like me?)
She fidgeted with her fingers as she looked up at me. That’s what you’d expect from the fabricated hallucination I created, she really knows how to tickle me jimmies. However! The one I like isn’t you, Miena, but Himeno Miina! That’s important.
(So you don’t like me, but my other personality…)
She averted her gaze from me, looking down at the ground. It seems like she’s fully lost all previous tension. She might just be my imaginary friend, but it makes me think I actually hurt Himeno Miina, so I should probably provide a follow-up. Listen, I probably just subconsciously changed you a bit so that it’s easier for us to talk. It’s not your fault or anything, Miena.
(…! I-I see, so that’s what you think…)

Yeah, so you can just stay the way you are right now.
(I can stay…the way I am?)
Of course. The way you are, it makes talking to you much easier, and enjoyable.
(……R-Really?)
Was it just my imagination? It felt like her usual energy returned to her face. And with that my alarm rang. 7am huh, gotta prepare for school.
(That's right, let's talk about this later. School is important after all!)
I made it to school on time, and headed to my classroom like always. The school I am attending is a private high school with an integrated middle and high school. Everything is pretty much a normal high school. Of course, disregarding the exceptional existence known as Himeno Miina.
(Really? I actually like this school a lot. The uniforms are cute, and the school buildings are charming.)
It's true that the female uniforms' cuteness is definitely an appealing point. However, that's about it. With six classes in one year, every class has about plus or minus 35 people. I'm in class 5, Himeno Miina is in class 6. Class 6 is a bit different, as they only take in people who get the highest grades during the entrance exams. It's basically like a different caste filled with study-focused students. On a side note, Himeno Miina enrolled at this school as the head of the school year, basically greeting everyone at the entrance ceremony, making her like the center of our year.
(That's not true, and you know that. Every single student is working hard to keep this school going.)
Yeah yeah, thanks for acting like an honor student. A heroine doesn't understand the feelings of a mob, you hear me. Not to mention that you're even less of a mob, since you were created by one!
(Can you stop lifting me up only to drop me down on the ground again, it's hard to decide what I should feel…)
Going up the usual stairs, I took the same usual hallway, and entered the same usual classroom.
(Enough with the usual usual usual appeal already. You're in my neighbouring class, right? We might have passed each other in the usual—Wait no, in the hallway.)
Ever since the entrance ceremony in spring, we've passed each other a total of 120 times.
(Why do you remember the exact number?!)
If you're my imaginary friend, then you ought to remember that number.
(I'm not your imaginary friend! Ah, there's your friend from yesterday. Shouma-kun, was it.)
"Sup, Itsuki."
"Ayo."
(What's with this boorish greeting. Put a bit more energy behind it)
"Zip it. Are you my mom or something…"
"Huh? Mom? Itsuki, are you still half asleep or something?"

“Ah, no, wait. Just forget about that right now. I’m probably still a bit dozy, yeah, ahaha.”
Thanks to Miena, Shouma now thinks of me as a weirdo.
(It’s not my fault at all. Though hey, you sure are close with Shouma-kun, huh.)
Yeah, although he’s busy with his part-time job, so we don’t have much time to hang outside of school.
(That’s pretty admirable. Maybe he’s earning money for his student fees?)
Not at all. For his haircuts, his shopping sprees, and money so that he can eventually take out a girl to an expensive restaurant. For that, he’s working part-time at convenience stores or game centers. He mentioned working at a haunted house before, working as a ghost. He really works hard for his money.
(I-I see. Well, that’s still admirable after all. He’s working on himself, right? It’s rare to see someone put up this much effort for others.)
If it really was for other people, yeah. He’s just a high school boy with ulterior motives across the board.
“Hey now, Itsuki? Are you making fun of me or something?”
“J-Just your imagination. Anyway, do you have some new info?”
“Oh! Listen carefully, I got a real steamy story for ya!”
(Info? What are you talking about?)
“Apparently, the number one popular girl of class 3, Shiraishi-san, got a boyfriend now!”
“Seriously!? Didn’t she reject all eight guys who confessed to her since April? What kind of guy did she choose?”
“Some upperclassmen from a different school. Apparently she was hit on during summer break at the beach, and they started dating shortly after.”
“Phew, that sounds so normie, alright.”
(Um, I don’t really get what you two are talking about…If I had to guess, you’re talking about the relationship status of the various female students…?)
You got it pretty much right there, yeah.
“However, I didn’t get any information regarding ‘her’, although I know you probably cared about her the most.”
“That’s a shame.”
(Who is ‘her’?)
The very ‘her’ in question suddenly asked this question with great interest.
“Well, with Himeno Miina, even I would get some information if she suddenly got a boyfriend, so rest assured, my brother.”
(Wait, it’s about me!?)
You really don’t need to be so shocked about it…
“No info about what happened with Himeno Miina yesterday?”
“No, nothin’. As I told you, if anything happened regarding her, the info would spread like a wildfire. Not even Shiraishi-san can compare against Himeno Miina in terms of popularity.”

(Eh, r-really…? If something happened to me, Shouma-kun would know about that? That's a bit scary…)
Yeah, you really should not underestimate this guy's intel on girls and his connections.
(Hmmmm, even if you make it sound so impressive…But, I am curious, am I really standing out that much…?)
"Huh!? What snide comment is that supposed to be!?"
"Why are you screaming like that, Itsuki!? There's no snide comment here, Himeno Miina is just that popular. You should know that very well, right? Nobody compared you and Himeno Miina."
"Ah, sorry…Yeah, you're right. I got the wrong idea there, my bad."
Right, there's nobody who would compare me to Himeno Miina anyway. Damn it, that damn Miena, making me seem like a weirdo.
(Are you making this my fault again?)
Not to mention that this girl is Miena, and not the actual Himeno Miina. I have to stay aware of that fact. Also by the way, my beloved Himeno Miina is super popular! Almost all the guys have a thing for her! She's not just standing out, alright!
(R-Really now…But, I wonder why, I feel a bit irritated now. I can't just rationally accept that fact for some reason.)
Well, Miena's voice sounds like the real deal, so it's at least some good BGM.
(Also, about that Shiraishi-san, she already broke up with her boyfriend during summer break, you know?)
Huh? Really? Phew, that's a short relationship, alright. Well, it's typical, summer makes you passionate after all. Though, I still don't really get normies as I thought…Wait a second, why does Miena know about that?!
(Why? Because me and Shiraishi-san are in the same badminton club. On the last day of summer break activities, she told us about that.)
Why does my fabricated friend Miena have information that I should have no way of knowing?
(That's because I'm not your fabricated friend at all. Remember when I helped with your homework yesterday? I knew about stuff you didn't, right?)
Urk, now that you mention it. Hmmm, why? Has my brain developed its full potential, and offered me knowledge that I myself didn't have? If so, then I might just be a genius. From now on, I can just have Miena do all the studying for me.
(Don't just think you can use me like a slave. You have to do the studying yourself.)
But, I wonder about the whole Shiraishi-san case. If not for Miena telling me, I would not have known about that. I can say that for sure, since she and I never had any point of contact. I doubt she even knows who I am. Which makes me want to cry.

(Keep this a secret, okay? I told you on a whim, but I don't really like gossiping about people behind their backs, especially about their relationships.)
To press that point, Miena put her index finger on her lips.
"Say, Shouma, about Shiraishi-san, did you hear any news about her and her boyfriend having already broken up?"
(Hey! Were you even listening to me!?)
"Nope. There's a chance of course, but they only started dating during summer break, so that's a bit too fast, you don't think?"
"Yeah, you're right. Well, if you get any new info, let me know."
"Gotcha! This time, I'll even bring something in about Himeno Miina herself!"
(Nobody needs that! Where do you even get all your information from, jeez!)
Shouma isn't some evil guy, okay. He only tells me about this kind of information, and not if it's something the other person would dislike. This is just a way for us to spend time, since we're not popular with the girls.
(I-I see. But, I fully understand what kind of position Shouma-kun is in as a character.)
Hm? Character? That's an odd way to phrase it, but that's also where the conversation stopped. Once the classes ended for the day, Shouma came running with new information.
"Itsuki! It's just as you said!"
"About what?"
"Shiraishi-san! I told you how she got a boyfriend, right? It seems like they broke up during the same summer break again. Summer really makes you needlessly passionate, right."
(Ah, the same stuff Itsuki-san said.)
"S-Seriously…? I don't believe it…"
"Why are you so shocked about that? Also, this info is top secret between the girls even, so don't you tell anybody, alright?"
"Yeah, got it…Thanks for the intel."
(These best friend characters really are something. He's the real deal.)
Best friend character? Real deal?
"Anyway, I got my part-time work, so I'll be going ahead."
"Y-Yeah…"
Left behind by Shouma, I started thinking about the information I was just told. Hold on, so Miena is actually the real Himeno Miina…!?
(So you finally accepted it? Should have realized much earlier!)
I left the classroom, and headed to the stairs where I saved Himeno Miina yesterday. So, um, H-H-Himeno-san? Do you remember what happened here yesterday?
(Y-Y-You're way too nervous all of a sudden! Also, I'm Miena…!)
R-Right, you're Miena. Well, when I think of you as the real Himeno Miina, then my heart is just about to go crazy. Also, why are you acting strange now?

(You and I share the same heartbeat, so I can feel your heart racing inside of me!)
Following that, Miena told me about the fact that we share a sense of touch and other sensations, that she can't move away from me too far, and that she is an entity different from the real Himeno Miina. So that's what was going on…Remembering that bath yesterday now is suddenly a hell lot more embarrassing, alright.
(Y-You don't have to remember that, okay!)
R-Right…I'll just erase those memories. So, Miena, do you remember falling down from the stairs here?
(Yup. Yesterday you saved me when I fell down the stairs here. I still remember it vividly.)
Miena gently touched the floor of the resting space of the stairs. Well, she's not actually touching it, but that's besides the point. I guess that, after I saved Himeno Miina, Miena was born?
(Probably. When I came to my senses, I already stood behind you, Itsuki-kun.)
So you weren't my imaginary friend? Can't tell if that's good or not.
(The me right now…is probably something like a mental entity of the real me.)
Mental entity? Is that like a type of mind or soul? Sounds like it could come straight outta fiction.
(What's that gaze for? Aren't you doubting me a bit too much?)
I-I'm not, okay. More importantly, can't you just return to your main body, Miena?
(…I can't. Not to mention, if I stayed like this, I might just vanish eventually. Spending a day in this appearance, I realized that my presence had grown weaker.)
Seriously…That sure turned into a big thing all of a sudden…
(Yeah. Not to mention that there might be some kind of influence on my main body.)
You're saying that there's a chance some kind of disaster could befall Himeno Miina!? This is bad, very bad…I am worried about you, Miena, but I can't ignore Himeno Miina either. So there's no method to return you back to your main body? I'm partially at fault for creating this situation in the first place, so I'll help as best as I can.
(Fufu, that's very reassuring to hear. Thanks!)
Seeing Miena's bashful smile, my heart skipped a beat. Since she wasn't acting like the usual Himeno Miina, it was even more destructive. Surprise attacks aren't fair, alright.
(So, I would assume that if my main body and Itsuki-kun were to touch, it would turn me back to normal.)
Touch!? What do you mean touch? Something simple? That sounds already too difficult for me.

(Before, I didn’t really know about Itsuki-kun, but now that you saved me here at these stairs, I’m at least conscious of you as a boy, so you should have it much easier when talking to me.)
The part of ‘I didn’t really know about Itsuki-kun’ seriously hurt a lot, and shocked me to my bone, but if I care about that, I’ll lose. I always knew I wasn’t popular.
(Sorry, I didn’t mean it that way! But it’s fine, you might have been nervous when talking to my main body, but you’re doing just fine with me right now.)
I am nervous when talking to Himeno Miina, but I can talk with Miena just fine, yeah.
(We’re the same person, okay! If only you’d interact this way with my main body, I’d probably return quickly enough.)
I said this before, but your personality is totally different from Himeno Miina.
(……..W-Well, this is who I really am.)
E-Eh? Ehhhhh!? What kind of tremendous confession is that!? You’re joking, right!
(Are you…disappointed? Sorry, but it’s the truth, so I can’t help it.)
So basically…Himeno Miina is just ‘acting’ like a perfect student at school?
(I don’t really agree with that expression. It’s more like I kept up a good face to match the people around me, and eventually ended up this way.)
Seriously…I thought that Himeno Miina was a gentle person, elegant and considerate…
(The me that you think is the real one…is actually nothing but a facade. Or in other words, it’s a fake.)
To think that Himeno Miina had such a hidden side like this!
(Ah, you’re poking fun at me again!)
“Hello.”
Right as we were having a bit of banter at the resting space of the stairs, Miena’s greeting suddenly reached my ears.
“Huh? Why’re you suddenly greeting me like that? Weirdo.” I turned towards Miena, and threw those words at her, but the transparent girl just tilted her head.
(Eh? I didn’t say anything though.)
No, I definitely heard a voice tickle my ears, and not just inside my brain…
“Sorry to suddenly call you out like that. I wanted to once again thank you for yesterday. Are you hurt anywhere?”
“A-A-Ah!? Yessss!?”
(Oh, it’s the real me.)
Yup, sure is. That’s Himeno Miina alright. Ahaha…my voice cracked…I want to die…
“He…h-h-h-h-hello!!”
(You’re screaming too much! Why are you greeting me now!? Ah, my heart, it’s beating so fast, it’s going to jump out of my chest…!)

Miena's cheeks twitched, and her body convulsed. It's like she was a perfect replication of me.
"……Thank you very much for yesterday. Please take care of yourself. Then, if you would excuse me." Himeno Miina deeply bowed her head to me, and walked down the stairs.
Thus, it was just me and Miena again.
(Haaa…huff…It seems like ordinary methods won't be able to resolve this situation…)
My heart was still racing. To think I'd interact with my angel two days in a row.
(Angel…Wait no, so this how your heart reacts when my real body is close to you, huh.)
Did you finally get it? As long as some weird event like before doesn't happen, I don't think I can just normally touch Himeno Miina.
(I see, this seems to require a special strategy…)
Miena started muttering something to herself. At the same time, a girl's voice called out to me from above the stairs.
"Hey, Itsuki~ What were you talking about with Hime?"
This energetic voice and way of speaking definitely belonged to Rion. I could tell even without seeing her face.
(Ah, it's your childhood friend!)
Why is Miena so hung up on that, I wonder. She was going crazy yesterday as well, super fishy.
"Got nothing to do with you, Rion~"
(Hey, what's that attitude for! Don't you feel bad for Rion-chan!?)
It's fine, that's how we've always been. Also, she saw us just now?
"Again with that harsh attitude, huh. Well, that's just like you, Itsuki."
(Ohhh, that's a childhood friend for you, she really understands! That's what childhood friends are for~)
Damn, she might even be more loud than Rion…physically.
"Also, what are you doing here, Rion? Go on home already."
"I was just thinking, how about we go home together? We live right next to each other after all."
"Huh? What if people started spreading weird rumours about us? Don't wanna."
"Ehhh, don't be like that. Or what, are you being conscious of me as a girl, which makes you nervous?" My childhood friend closed in on me.
(Hm? Hmmmm??? Rion-chan, that kind of reaction is…!?)
Next to me, Miena was groaning and thinking to herself. She's as much of a mystery as always.
"Hell no. You're just Rion, that's all."
"What's that even supposed to mean? Well, I got no club today, and it'll be just the two of us, so let's go home together?"

It won’t just be the two of us, Miena’s right here! Rion suddenly clung to my arm, and forcefully dragged me outside the school building. This is bad, if someone saw us like this…
(You’re not nervous at all when it comes to Rion-chan, huh?)
She’s my childhood friend after all. No need to be conscious of her as a girl.
(Hmmmm…?)
Miena showed somewhat of a suggestive grin, floating around me and Rion.
“Going home together with Itsuki…It’s been quite some time. Since we were in grade school?”
“I do think that you forcefully dragging me home like this is a first.”
“Hehehe, you’re not wrong!”
(Ever since you were in grade school…Ah, did she invite you because she saw you talking with my real body!?)
Why would that be the case?
(Hmmm…I don’t know, just a hunch. But, why did you never go home together with her ever since then? She’s your precious childhood friend, right!)
Back in grade school, my parents got divorced, so it was all a bit messy.
(……Sorry, I didn’t mean to invade your privacy like that.)
It’s fine, really. All in the past, when I was a brat. Also, it’s not normal to go home together even if we’re childhood friends.
(Ehhh, I don’t buy that. If I was you, I’d go home with Rion-chan every single day.)
Alright, let me just ignore Miena obsessing over Rion. Right now, I’m more curious about Rion’s actions, suddenly inviting me like this. After she let go of my hand, I took a glance at her profile. For some reason, she seemed a bit bashful, and awkward. Why’s she blushing like that after inviting me?
(Is he…the dense type!?)
“Preparations for the culture festival are around the corner, right.” Rion stopped in her tracks, and suddenly brought up a story of next month.
“Hm? Oh, yeah.”
(Your childhood friend brought it up, why do you seem so disinterested despite that…)
Because I don’t really care, to be honest.
“You’re really not interested in anything about this school, huh.”
“Who cares about me now. What are you gonna do for the culture festival?”
“I have to help with the tennis club’s attraction. I’ll be busy with preparations starting next week.”
“Hmm.”
“Come on, show a bit more excitement, okay. I’ll be making some soft ice cream on the day, so you better stop by!”
(I’m definitely going!)
Before I could even react, Miena’s eyes lit up, as she responded to Rion’s words. Do you want to eat soft ice cream that badly? Well, she’s a young girl, so she must like sweet stuff.

“If I’m bored, yeah. But, I got some other important stuff to do.”
Helping Miena back into her original body, for example.
“Eh, what’s up with that? Is it something more important than the culture festival?”
“Yeah, pretty much.”
“……Is that related to Hime?” Rion asked me with a stern face.
“W-Why would you bring her up now? Also……this got nothing to do with you, Rion.”
“Jeez…Listen, I know that you have the hots for Hime, but…”
“What’s been going on with you? You’re not making any sense.”
“……No, it’s nothing, sorry about that! Let’s both try our best!”
She brought it up, and dropped it herself. As always, this childhood friend of mine doesn’t make any sense.
(C-C-C-Cuuuuute!)
“Pfffft! Wah!”
“Itsuki, why’d you suddenly scream like that!?”
Because Miena’s loud voice almost made my head burst. She’s as much of a mystery as you, Rion!
(This is the ideal childhood friend character! We need to move on to the childhood friend route right away! Ahhh haaa!)
Why’s she breathing so heavily now? She just talked about you, so worry about that some more…
(The greatest attributes in this world are the childhood friend and the little sister! We have the childhood friend clinging to the protagonist, and the little sister calling the protagonist Onii-chan. Rather than some main heroine that appears out of thin air, their bonds run so much deeper!)
Miena suddenly started rambling on and on which made it hard for me to follow. Is she even speaking English at this point? What do you even mean by greatest attributes…
“Itsuki-nii~ Let’s go home together~”
(That’s right, there’s the little sister who would be attached to the protagonist, and…Hmmm!?)
As I was left confused with both of these girls making no sense, a small girl with twintails suddenly clung to me.
“Ah, Himari! What are you doing!”
What, just Himari? Don’t surprise me like that. Well, I guess she’s probably the only person who would do that. She’s Tsukimiya Himari, a third-year at the middle school division here, basically a friend from middle school and a junior of mine. She treats and calls me like an older brother, but she is not my younger sister. Apparently, her sun and moon hair ornaments reflect her two personalities or something?

(A-A little sister!? Itsuki-san, you not only have a caring childhood friend but also a loli little sister!?)
Again, she's not my little sister. Also, Rion isn't caring at all, just meddlesome. Himari is a loli though.
"Hey, Himari, you're at the middle school division, so you can't just waltz on over here."
"Ehhhh, classes have already ended, so it's fine, right~? I wanted to go home yesterday with Itsuki-nii, but you were already gone! That's why I was waiting at the school gate!"
Well, I can't tell her I was rushing home to finish my summer homework, it'd be an embarrassment as an upperclassman…
"Sorry, Himari, but Itsuki will be going home together with me today."
Since Rion was with us at the middle school division, she knows Himari quite well herself.
"Then, let's all go home together? We live in the same direction after all."
"Urk…Himari, you're my junior, so don't just steal this from me…"
"Rion-nee? Did you say something?"
Rather than being senior and junior, Rion and Himari are more like sisters.
(What a heavenly position this is! It's totally different from my average high school life…)
The hell are you talking about? Himeno Miina's world is always sparkling, unlike this shithole that I'm in.
(I now understand a lot about your personality, Itsuki-kun. I'll build the strategy upon this.)
Can you stop spurting nonsense all the damn time!?
"Whatever, I'm just going home. I'm tired because of some stuff."
"Ah, wait a second, Itsuki."
"Itsuki-nii, don't leave me behind!"
(Itsuki-kun…that choice was the worst of all. You're lowering their affection for you.)
I ignored my childhood friend, junior, and mental entity all together and walked on ahead, but in the end, we still all walked home together. Miena was floating next to me as well.
Inside the train ride home, despite it being close to rush hour, we luckily found three seats. Miena could just float around us, so she's fine. The inside of the train was filled with a loud BGM, consisting of student groups either consisting of only girls or mixed with boys.
"Literary club is the same as always?" I asked Himari, who sat right of me on the edge of her seat.
"…Yeah. Ever since you graduated, it's only been me."
"You alone, huh. I guess you'll be lonely once you move up to high school." Rion said to my left, as she had her arms crossed behind her head.
No clue why exactly I'm sitting between the two, but whatever.

“You’ll get more friends once you move up to high school, the literary club we have has a lot of members.”
“But, you’re in the go-home club, Itsuki-nii. That’s why I’ll also join the go-home club.”
(Such heavy flags being raised here, I can’t believe it…)
Flags?
“W-What are you talking about? There’s no need to cling to Itsuki like that. You just come to our badminton club, Himari. The go-home club will only make you rot like Itsuki.”
(The girls badminton club will welcome her for sure~)
Leaving aside Rion and Miena’s invitation to the badminton club and me being dissed…
“I just don’t have anything to do, which is why I’m in the go-home club. Got no real place to go, nor a hobby. I just spend my days in leisure, and peace. You should look for something fun, Himari.”
“Something fun…Spending time with Itsuki-nii and Rion-nee like this…I guess?”
“Jeez.”
“Once you’re in high school, you get yourself a boyfriend, and play with them? Of course, not Itsuki, but another guy.”
“Hmmm? I don’t really get that. Do you two want someone like that?”
Met with middle school student Himari’s innocent question, Rion showed a forced smile. What’s with that, you’re scaring me. You’re not even answering a question like that? What kind of upperclassman are you?
“I don’t have any hopes for that.”
(…Hmmm?)
Miena gave me a dubious gaze, almost like she knew what was going on.
“Isn’t there anything fun with your student life, Itsuki-nii?”
“Nope.”
I don’t even expect anything like that. Just talking to Himeno Miina is more than satisfying. Wishing for anything else would be presumptuous of a worthless mob like me.
(This kind of mean thinking might be actually good. I see, I see~)
Are you praising me or dissing me?
“I guess being a high school student must be hard…”
Seeing both our expressions and reactions, Himari showed a complicated comment. There’s some other students in this train car, living their days in joy and excitement, but I can’t see Himari ending up like that. Even after I’ve become a high school student, nothing much has changed—right when I was thinking about that, I saw an older lady standing behind a group of the students, a walking stick keeping her standing.
“Hm? Itsuki, why’re you suddenly standing up like that? We still have a few more stations to go through.”
I didn’t give Rion any response, and approached the older lady.

“U-Um, if you’d like, you can take my seat.” I told her with an awkward tone.
In response to me suddenly calling out to her, the older lady gave me a dubious look, only to grasp what I was talking about, and showed me a warm smile.
“Oh my, are you sure?”
“Yes, please go ahead.”
“I’m sorry about this, and thank you.” The older lady gave me her honest gratitude.
I carefully guided the older lady to the seat to make sure that she wouldn’t lose her balance in the shaking train car.
“Sorry, Rion, could you move next to Himari?”
“Ah, y-yeah! But, I’ll stand, so you can sit down, Itsuki.”
“Nah, I’m fine.”
I gave an immediate response, to which Rion gave a wry smile, and moved to the seat I previously sat on. This allowed the older lady to sit on Rion’s seat, as she rubbed her legs.
(I guess this old lady has a bad leg…That’s pretty admirable, Itsuki-kun.)
It’s not that big of a deal. Something like this is normal.
The older lady got off a few train stations later. Since she gave me her gratitude before leaving, I sent her off with a polite smile.
“You’re always quick to act with this kind of stuff, Itsuki. I guess this is what they call a good observation.”
After I sat down again, Rion spoke up with an astonished tone. Leaving aside the fact that I sat between Rion and Himari once again.
“Just meddling, nothing more.”
“That’s not true at all. I didn’t even realize that older lady was there, because of all the students, and nobody even offered her a seat. You’ve always been considerate like that, Itsuki-nii, even ever since middle school!”
Himari’s eyes were radiating with respect, as she looked at me.
…Please, just stop. It’s not anything crazy.
(No, Himari-chan is right. When you’re together with friends, it’s hard to keep your surroundings in check, and keep a rational eye on everything… Let alone moving away from your group for something like that.)
You’re talking about being concerned about what people say behind your back? Well, that really is trouble in a group.
(……)
Himeno Miina is an existence loved by everybody. Everything around her is shining brilliantly, and she’s always in the focus of the camera like a heroine of a story. That’s why—seeing the dejected expression of the girl only I could perceive, it felt so far away from the usual Himeno Miina I knew, and almost unreal.
(Groups are troublesome…huh. Yeah, you’re right. If it was me, I wouldn’t have given that seat to that older lady, because I wouldn’t have been too concerned about the gazes of my friends…)

Together with that low voice, the atmosphere Miena gave off suddenly dropped into something depressing.
After I made it home, I sat down on the chair at my study desk, whereas Miena sat on my bed. Apparently, we can keep a distance of about one meter between us, and we can convey our thoughts with telepathy, which in return makes her feel mentally much closer. It's like our bodies were linked directly.
(Now then, let's talk about what to do from now on!)
Almost like her dejected atmosphere from before was nothing but a joke, Miena now spoke up with pure excitement in her voice. So you're talking about the whole returning you to your main body part you mentioned earlier, right?
(Exactly. Analyzing your personality and environment, I came up with a good method.)
D-Don't tell me…are you planning on sacrificing my heart for this…Well, if it's for Himeno Miina's sake, we could argue about that.
(Who am I, a devil?)
I mean, you saw my exchanges with Himeno Miina, right? Or rather, you must have felt it. That was my limit. Some mob male student like me can't hope to get closer than that with our main heroine Himeno Miina. It's like a difference between heaven and earth, sun and moon, paper lantern and temple bell, rice grain and nail.
(That last example is a bit confusing, but I get where you're coming from.)
If I was actually good at studying, or an ace at a sports club, even just a bit more handsome than now, I might be able to talk to her just fine though.
(Then, you just have to work hard to become the person you want to be. With that, you'll become more confident, and that'll allow you to talk to me just fine, right?)
Don't make it sound so simple. Also, no matter how hard I work, there's nothing that can be done anymore. The way I am right now is the result of the path I've been walking my life so far. It's a bad example for others, you could even say.
(Why can you be so proud about that? You sound much more confident than when you're complaining.)
In order for me to get along with Himeno Miina, I need to overcome this steep wall in front of me. Even though getting you back to your main body is more important…Sorry for being such a worthless mob.
(What you're lacking is confidence and experience, Itsuki-kun. It seems like we can only go with the strategy I came up with.)
Eh? Strategy? What are you on about?
(Fufufu, listen carefully! Starting today, we'll be starting the Himeno Miina Conquest Strategy!)
……Wat?
(First, we need information about the heroine we're going to conquer. Following that, we need to raise your protagonist stats. We'll deal with that

by using the good old practice by repetition principle, so no problems there —)
H-Hold on a second! I can't even follow you anymore!
(Hm? I'm talking about the procedure to conquer your heroine.)
H-Heroine? Are you talking about Himeno Miina…?
(There's only one heroine when it comes to you, right? We'll make it so that you can interact and touch me just fine. Of course, the goal is that I can return to my main body, but it shouldn't be that bad of a plan for you right, Itsuki-kun?)
Sorry, but were you even listening to what I said just now? I can't even properly talk to her, there's nothing that can be done about this.
(There sure is. If you get nervous when talking in front of a girl, you have to get used to it. And next, you need to become more confident.)
I can't suddenly change myself this quickly, you know that?
(I just have to give you advice whenever you're talking with my real body, so that you don't get too nervous. Alright, I'm burning with excitement!)
Why are you just progressing everything on your own!?
(In order to raise the chance of success, we need to gather information about your heroine.)
Information about my heroine, don't you already have all of that…
(Tsk tsk tsk, Itsuki-san. If you witness all of that directly, it'll set in much easier, right.)
Miena waved her index finger at me, lecturing me.
(If you learn of my true character, you surely won't be as nervous in front of me anymore.)
Seeing Miena grin with an arrogant tone in her voice as she provoked me was honestly terrifying. She's even talking about her true character and whatever. Well, I've already seen that in reality though.
(Hmpf, I'm not talking about me, but my real body.)
Miena's real body—I remembered Himeno Miina and our encounter today. She really is nice, being that worried about me. And she's cute…Guhehe.
(…! G-Geez, enough about that already!)
As I was giggling to myself, dwelling in the wonderful memories containing Himeno Miina, Miena crossed her arms, and started blushing. She's completely different from the Himeno Miina today…So, can't I just tell Himeno Miina about this Miena in my head?
(Go ahead and try, but she'll probably think of you as crazy. If you suddenly bring that up in front of me, even I would probably take my distance from you, Itsuki-kun.)
Oh lord…guess I can only go along with Miena's mysterious strategy, huh…
(It's fine, just leave it to me! Let's conquer your heroine!)
Like this, I would go and try to conquer my heroine with the help of my heroine…What kind of nonsense is this!?

1 The **I** in Itsuki is also pronounced Otsu, which means strange and queer
2 Kanpeki = Perfect
3 Jewel
4 Kabe = Wall
5 Pronounced like Miina, just written differently for context.
6 A joke regarding Rion’s name, because the ‘on’ is written with the kanji for sound.

Chapter 2: Miena and Himeno Miina.

The following day, after classes had ended, Miena and I decided to put the heroine conquest strategy into action, and were now waiting next to the school gate. In order to gain secret information on Himeno Miina, we had to stay on halt until her club activities were over. Miena mentioned that her main body apparently would be taking a detour on the first Friday of the month, something she even kept a secret to her friends…Then again, it's not really that secret since Miena knows about that for obvious reasons.
(Just focus up already. If the target realizes, then it's all over!)
The target—Himeno Miina is the ace of the girls badminton club. This is a pretty average school overall, but the girls badminton club is a big charm. After all, Himeno Miina managed to make it into the best four of this year's girls badminton national Inter High held during summer break, despite being only a first-year. Participating in a national tournament like that apparently was a big success for our school, which is why she received a testimonial on the opening ceremony.
(Only to then fall down the stairs, huh.)
If you're that good, didn't you get scouted by a powerhouse school?
(I did receive recommendations, but I wasn't too interested in any dormitory life. The school trying to scout me had a mandatory dormitory stay attached to it.)
Huh, I didn't expect that. Since it's you, I figured you would be able to get along with anybody, and you seemed like you were having fun with your clubmates.
(It'll make sense once you see who I really am.)
I wonder why? Maybe living in a dormitory would have been troublesome for her in some way. Now I'm curious. But, I'll surely find out about this in a few hours. Until then, I need to bear with this heat. Even after we moved on to September, the heat outside didn't change much, as I could feel sweat building beneath my uniform. As if to make it even more warm for me, I heard the passionate voices of the sports club members from the sports grounds. At the same time, the sweet tones of the wind instrument club drifted through the air. I didn't know which of the two was more passionate. Normally, around this time, I'd be sitting in my train home, not being boiled alive in this heat. These guys would practice all day, in a place and way I

had no chance of knowing. It was an odd feeling, as I saw discrepancies compared to the school I thought I had known. As a member of the go-home club, it felt like I was ostracised. I only know of their results, but never had any interest in the kind of efforts they put in to achieve those.
If you can't achieve anything, then effort is futile. Considering that, not doing any effort is better, otherwise you'll just be exhausted. Leave studying and sports to the people who can, and focus only on what you can do. That's much more efficient. For the world…and yourself.
(What you can do?)
I'm going to search for that from now on. If you're a 'Can-do-it-all' guy, then you have an endless amount of doors open for you, alright. For some average guy like me, this door doesn't show up that easily.
(It's not like you can do everything from the start. You need to put effort into it, and then grasp it.)
Not wrong, but some people can't grasp anything no matter how hard they try. People like me, for example.
(Itsuki-kun, I feel like you're just giving up without trying.)
Can't help it. Even after working hard on something, I could see no results. I might have given up on myself, but there's no problem as long as I don't trouble others.
(Are results really that important…)
What are you talking about? Even Himeno Miina is working hard right now in order to achieve good results. The ones who can do that are the chosen ones.
(…For what sake am I even working hard at my club?)
Miena turned towards the gym hall, where her real body was probably training right now. I mean, it's to leave behind good results, right?
(Hmm…I don't think so. Honestly speaking, it's probably just hard to say you want to quit. You'd betray parents and friends.)
Eh, it's that kind of negative reason!?
(That's just how it is. You're just pushing your ideals onto me, Itsuki-kun. I'm not as great of a human being as you think I am.)
I'll be able to see just what you're talking about in a bit. Can't tell if I'm excited for it or not, though. Almost as if to respond to my expectations, the chime rang, signaling the end of club activities for the day. So, what are we going to do now?
(If we see my real body at the shoe lockers, we'll tail her from a bit further away!)
Yeah yeah, tailing, I got it…Wait hold on!? Why are we tailing her!? That just makes me a stalker! Do you want to turn me into a criminal or something!?
(It's fine, even if a police officer caught you and you get interrogated, just tell them that an imaginary girl told you to do that.)
…You'll get turned into an insane asylum! Not good.

(As long as she doesn’t find out, there’s no problem. And also not really if she finds out. Today, my real body is probably quite wary and careful of her surroundings, but with your tailing skill, you’ll be fine, Itsuki-kun!)
My tailing skill isn’t that good at all! And yet, Miena formed a fist in front of her chest, brimming with confidence. Why does she look like she’s having so much fun? What we’re doing is absolutely evil.
(I mean, tailing reminds me of some detective drama, you know. Since it’s me we’re tailing, there’s absolutely no guilt either.)
I do feel guilty, you know!?
(I’m not the type who goes crazy because of a bit of tailing, okay.)
Don’t just drop bombshells like that.
(Look! My real body came to the shoe lockers! Hide behind the car over there. From there, you can start tailing her much easier.)
Oh no, the tailing is starting without me even being ready!? Also, isn’t she awfully used to tailing others?
(If anything, I’m good at shaking off people tailing me. I tend to get a bit too much attention from some boys, ever since middle school.)
Well yeah, with that kind of face, I bet you must have it rough. Also, you’re excited to finally be able to be on the tailing side, and not the other way around?
(Exactly! I’m burning up! We need to stay hidden until she gets to her destination!)
…I feel like you’re just using me for your own fun, you know.
(Focus up…Alright, she went past the school gate, we’re starting the tailing now. Keep a safe distance, and hide in the shadows while you’re following her.)
Ms. Stalker was never this motivated before. I however moved carefully, so that I wouldn’t end up in the girl’s view. As for Miena, she was floating behind me, her eyes sparkling in excitement. Of course, there’s no reason for Miena to hide like that, but…And rather than the position between me and the target, what’s going on between me and Miena is much bigger of a problem. I could hear her excited breathing and warmth breathing right next to my ear, and because my imagination skill is far too great, I kept imagining her chest hitting my back even though I didn’t feel anything.
(Oh? Itsuki-kun, finally motivated? You’re excited, right?)
Y-Y-Yeah! I guess! I gave a vague response, and continued the tailing. It seems like Himeno Miina was heading home with friends from the girls badminton club. One, two, three…Four people in total, huh. There’s even Shiraishi-san from class 3 with her. They seem to be talking about something, I’m exceptionally curious. Girls talk on the way home from school sure feels like youth, alright. And I’m spending my youth as a stalker, so who am I to talk?
(I don’t think they’re talking about anything crazy. Complaints at the club advisor, how lame the homework is, or about a popular sweets shop nearby, even the culture festival next month. Something like that, you know.)

I guess it’s not anything crazy for you Miena, huh.
(I would just give random comments to the topic at hand, and give a vague opinion if it was needed.)
Really? From my point of view, it feels like Himeno Miina is the center of that group. And yet, she’s not interested in whatever the conversation topic is? What an irony that is.
(I do think of the topic at hand as boring, but as long as I don’t openly show that, nobody can complain, and nobody will be hurt, right? Hehe.)
That logic sure is annoying, alright. I’ll use that in the future as well. But, you’re not even interested in the culture festival? Rion said she’s busy with the preparations of the tennis club, right. Leaving aside me, it’s pretty surprising that Himeno Miina isn’t interested in that kind of thing.
(I am interested in Rion-chan’s homemade sweets! But, the culture festival itself doesn’t interest me much.)
Seriously? You don’t sound like our school’s idol at all.
(Because I’m not an idol~!)
As we were discussing that, we reached the train station next to the school. The group of four then turned into three, and they boarded the train, taking the opposite way of which I would take to get home. I boarded the train wagon next to the one Himeno Miina and her friends were in. It seems like they were having a mindless conversation. I found it hard to believe that she was simply showing a fake smile to satisfy her friends. Or rather, I didn’t want to.
(Hey now, no talking badly about people. It’s not like everything about it is a lie, and I do like my friends, okay? Also, it’s normal for girls to just probe at each other’s feelings, but not stepping too far, okay. We all ask for superficial joy. I like myself when I hear other people’s problems, and also when I can help them. That’s how you keep a friendly relationship.)
To a mob with zero communication like me, that sounds like it’d be impossible. But, that sounds just like Himeno Miina, I would have no idea she’s feeling that way, looking at her face.
(Don’t say it like that…But, you’re right. I do look like I’m enjoying this a lot more…I’m making such a defenceless smile…)
Having that pointed out, I also felt like something was off. What I saw from her through the first term was a polished and refined atmosphere. At the same time as she was friendly with everyone, it felt like she wouldn’t let anybody get too close. It contradicted itself, but that’s what it felt like to me. Right now however, it looked like she enjoyed talking to her friends from the bottom of her heart……No, it’s a bit different.
(Leaving aside you observing me this closely, you’re right about something. This does feel a bit odd…)
Maybe her train of thought now changed with you gone from her head? All these distant feelings are gone now, and she became a snow white and pure Himeno Miina? So Miena was evil all along!?
(No! I’m the original, and the real deal! S-So why…**Sniff**.)

Don’t just start crying. Actually, don’t start fake-crying.
(Well, it’ll be faster if you just confirm it yourself. As long as you’re still not sure, you have to continue tailing her, and see my real personality.)
Sorry about that. I tend to make the wrong move as I’m a good-for-nothing. Same as going home is a wrong move at times. Anyway, as I was ridiculing myself, the other two friends of Himeno Miina got off the train.
(They’re living near the train station here. My home is two further stations away.)
Just like the train station I was using to get home, this was a train station with no limited express stops here. The train station where Himeno Miina usually gets off was more like a terminal, which allowed you to get on several terminals, and limited express trains also stopped here…Why do I feel like I lost.
(You’re concerned about the weirdest stuff. I usually don’t take limited express trains.)
The words of the commoner do not reach the royalty, as usual. Our train arrived at the train station that had limited express trains, but Himeno Miina showed no signs of getting off.
(You can stop talking about limited express trains already!)
And then, a large number of people boarded the train. Himeno Miina took a seat in an open space, and just observed the scenery. Since all the other people around her were busy gazing at their smartphones in one hand, Himeno Miina stood out compared to the rest.
(I also look at my phone from time to time. But…something really is off.)
It feels pretty normal from how I know you though?
(That’s what’s weird. Usually, I’d confirm if there aren’t people I know around me. Not to mention that I’m in the middle of the train wagon, so I’m just being careless at this point!)
Really?
(Normally, after separating from my friends, I’d move to the very first or last train wagon. On top of that, I would always sit on the furthest end, often even wearing a mask.)
That’s much more unnatural, okay!
(Still, that stupid look on my face…It’s full of openings, did I always look like that? I’m starting to hate myself here…)
After Himeno Miina split up with her friends, she seemed much more peaceful, and relaxed…Cute. To me, it didn’t look stupid at all, but just cute.
(Hmpf. You’re too naive when it comes to me, Itsuki-kun! No, you’re quite strict towards me…but not the real me. Why not show me some of that kindness as well!?)
I don’t like cheating on my beloved one.
(We’re the same person though!?)
While having a bit of banter back and forth, we reached the area that you could call the center of town. After another five minutes of being shaken back and forth inside the train, we reached the next train station.

(Ah, this is it! This is where my real body gets off, so hurry up!)
I frantically looked over at Himeno Miina, and it did seem like she was preparing to head off. I joined her, and continued to tail her.
(My real body doesn't realize it at all, huh…I'm way too careless. I feel like knocking her down.)
Stop that. Are you already tired of stalking, wanting to move on as a violent molester? Still, that's a Friday rush hour for you, the train station is crowded with people everywhere. Some even carried large plastic bags in their hands, others with large backpacks weighing them down, all aiming for a destination. At the same time, there were also men and women in suits, probably on the way home from work. If I even looked away from the target for a second, I'd surely lose her immediately. I feel like tailing the target without her finding out would be quite difficult. Also, isn't this train station…
"We're a maid cafe that opens tomorrow! Please stop by if you have the time~!"
An energetic maid called out to me, handing me tissues together with a flyer. The building in front of me had a large anime illustration hanging down from it. Vending machines selling toys lined up at the site of the main street in the shadows of the sun. From the stores and establishments around me, I heard familiar anime songs……Hold on, ain't this Akihabara!?
(Correct.)
It's not like Akihabara, or Akiba for short, is anything out of the ordinary, but it's more the fact that Himeno Miina supposedly has business here that shocks me. Isn't this the place exactly opposite of what she would like? I do come here from time to time to shop for something, but I'm not a passionate otaku. I watch new popular anime, but I wouldn't actually buy the Blu-ray disks. I do buy games from time to time, but only super popular RPGs. I only check into my mobile games for the login bonus. I don't know any VAs like at all, nor do I have any idols I'm supporting.
What am I even living for then? I'm not an otaku, I don't study, and I don't participate in any clubs either.
(I could tell at first glance that you're not an otaku, Itsuki-kun. No weird goods either.)
Can we just forget about me, and focus on Himeno Miina!? I feel like she'd have a prejudice about this stuff.
(Oho, you're saying I dislike Akiba?)
What's that pressure about!? I mean, I feel like you'd probably walk around Shibuya or Harajuku's shops like the other normies. Beauty shops, sweet shops, you know?
(I do join my friends there from time to time. But as I said just now, I'm not really that interested in that kind of stuff.)
In that kind of stuff? So what about this kind…?
(I absolutely love it!)

Wah! Your character is breaking apart! Also, are you kidding me!? The real personality you mentioned is an otaku!?
(W-Well, that's…Meow, I want you to look at the real me, meow~)
Pfffft!? Miena raised one hand like a cat's paw, going meow meow. Despite starting this whole thing herself, she was blushing furiously. How am I even supposed to react?
(You're so boring~ Don't worry, I'm not interested in adding meow at the end of every sentence.)
Thanks for telling me, now I can rest in peace. But, I'm still not buying it, alright. Unless I see Himeno Miina buy otaku goods with my own eyes, I will not fall for any slander! I continued following Himeno Miina until she stopped in front of a shop, checked out the display case, and entered.
(This is our goal. We managed to tail her just fine, huh.)
I mixed in together with another customer, entering the shop. Now it's an infiltration mission. Also, there sure are a lot of people here. Wait, where did Himeno Miina go? Crap, I might have lost her!
(Calm down, this place is split into floors, and she definitely went up to the 5th.)
I followed Miena's directions, and headed up to the 5th floor, checking inside. Unlike the floors down below, this place wasn't as crowded, with only like five people in here. Maybe because it's dinner time on a Friday?
(Yeah, that's the reason I come here on a Friday. Though there's also the part of tomorrow being a Saturday.)
I see, makes sense, this being a gal game store after all…….Hold on, what!? Eh, wait, what is going on…I get that you're interested in otaku stuff, and that you like Akiba as well. B-But, gal games!? All the customers here are guys! They're all experienced warriors!
……Except, there was a single girl. She was a beauty that made your jaw drop. She looked like a heroine that jumped out of one of the games being advertised here. Except the employee working there, all the other guys were looking at her in shock.
(The employee knows me after all. He's a nice person, always giving me good recommendations.)
Aha…ahahaha, you're kidding me, right…There's no way that my Himeno Miina would be into gal games! She's supposed to be a pure and delicate idol who has no resistance towards this stuff…
(Way too many points to retort on there. I'm not pure or delicate, nor am I an idol~)
No, you are pure. Weren't you embarrassed to see me naked when taking a bath?
(Bath…naked…)
Ah, I remembered!!
(Ah, you made me remember!!)
Calm down, me! Calm down, this isn't the time or place to remember that!

(…G-Geez. Just look at my real body now! She’s been staring at the package for a hot minute now. She’s definitely gonna buy that!)
How can you be so sure? There’s always a chance that she’ll buy a game from a different developer. Or, she might go home without buying anything.
(Mom pointed this out before, but whenever I’m anticipating or looking forward to something, I have this habit of raising up the left side of my hair. It’s probably because I’m excited about it. I apparently do it when I’m at a checkpoint during badminton. And now, I’m lifting up my hair again.)
Now that’s some juicy personal information nobody else knows! Watching Himeno Miina from afar, just as Miena had guessed, she took the package to the cash register.

(I was planning on buying that game for a while now. So, after going back and forth, I finally made up my mind to buy it today.)
H-Huh…So, why didn't you buy it last month?
(I couldn't come here because of the Inter High. I held back for two months, you know. If I hadn't participated in the Inter High, I might have been able to enjoy my summer break to the fullest. Ahhh, I wanna hurry and play it!)
Are you really comparing Inter High to a gal game right now? …Maybe my common sense is just messed up?
(To think that Itsuki-kun, who isn't even part of a club, would say something like that, hehe.)
Since it came from the person I thought was enjoying their youth most out of everyone I knew, I was just shocked…So, the reason you rejected a school's invitation that had mandatory dormitory life…?
(Because I can't keep playing the gal games I like as openly as I can now.)
Hahahaha…I looked over at Himeno Miina, who bought the game at the cash register, happily smiling.
(Now you must have understood who I really am, right?)
…Yes. Thanks to this entire mess, I realized that this is the real Himeno Miina.
(I'm glad you finally understood not only my real body, but also accepted me right now.)
Still, what a shame, Miena. You won't get to play that game after all.
(Uuuu…)
While cheering up Miena, I headed to Akihabara station.
(Uuuu…Sniff sniff…)
Will you cheer up already?
(Waaaah, it's not faaair! I've been waiting to play that game for two months! Why did I even work so hard at the Inter High! Urk…)
Self-fulfillment? To reach a goal you were working hard for? Something like that?
(That follow-up actually has no pervasiveness at all. That's a go-home club member for you.)
She spit harsh words at me that held no power at all. I've been meaning to ask, but if you go back to your main body, which Himeno Miina will result from that?
(Which Himeno Miina…Both are me, so nothing will change. All I know is that the transparent me will disappear from your side.)
What about your memories? What will happen with the memories you gained during that time?
(I'll probably inherit the memories? I never went through this before, so I wouldn't know.)
That means the memories of the main body will remain as well, right? Then, there's no reason to be frustrated that you couldn't play the gal game, right, Miena?

(You might be right, but again, I have no way of knowing how the whole inheriting memories thing works.)
I see…
(Hmm? What's that gloomy face for?)
Well, you know…I know that I'm being a real coward here, but…
(What's up~? It's rare for you to be stuck up on words, even towards me.)
Tehe~ I was just thinking that if you return to your main body with your current memories, that means I would be able to freely talk with Himeno Miina, right? Just kidding.
(Yeah, you're not wrong. If it's me, then you're always nervous after all. But at this rate, you still won't be able to interact with my real body, right?)
So we're still at zero!? I'm cursed with my low communication skill, seriously.
(Even if you manage to touch me and return me back to normal, we don't know if my memories will remain. If so, then my real body will probably treat you like a weirdo, and your high school life is over.)
That's terrifying, alright. I don't want to lose my high school life this early. It's barely started. But, more than anything, I think it would be pretty sad if your memories as Miena just went up and vanished.
(Oh my oh my? Have you taken a liking to me? Fufu.)
Miena showed a teasing smile. If this was the real Himeno Miina, she would never show me such an expression. If it was her real body, she would probably treat me like a stranger and be cautious with me around.
"Saotome-kun!?"
Yeah, just like that…Wait no, hold on! Himeno Miina totally spotted me, right!?
(This sure is awkward. I can't tell who has bad timing here…)
Himeno Miina frantically hid the plastic bag with the gal game behind her back, and fidgeted nervously.
"W-What a coincidence to meet you here. Are you out shopping?"
It totally ain't a coincidence, but I can't just confess that I was following her.
"Eh, ah, yes, that's right!"
For now, I tried to give a vague response, and hide that fact. She managed to regain her calm immediately, smiling at me with a divine smile.
(There's nothing calm about this! Why is your heart racing as soon as my real body appears!?)
"A friend of mine asked to buy something for them. Since this is the first time I came here, I was quite nervous."
She emphasized the fact that she definitely wasn't here because of herself, and that she was here for the first time.
(Grrr…What a blatant lie. Itsuki-kun, this is your chance, we have the advantage!)
"T-This is also my first time…y-y-y-yes!"
(What are you talking about!? Also, don't just go along with her lie, okay!?)

“Is that so. It’s gotten pretty late, so be careful on your way home. Now then, I wish you a happy weekend.”
Himeno Miina gave a polite bow, and passed through the ticket gate of the train station.
(She ran away!)
She probably wants to play the gal game she bought as quickly as possible… Ahaha.
After I made it home, I sat on the chair in my room, analyzing the situation.
(That just now was your perfect chance, you know.)
Miena sunk down on her personal resting space in my room, namely my bed. How exactly was that a chance…
(You were at the hideout of the heroine you aim to conquer. If you kept on pushing, you might have won her over, or at least raised a flag.)
No no no, wasn’t Himeno Miina feeling uncomfortable because she was seen by me?
(Not wrong, but I always wanted friends I could share my hobby with. If I knew that you’re interested in gal games, I would have latched on so quickly.)
Seriously? If I had known about that beforehand, I would have maybe been able to move the conversation that way, but…Maybe not. I guess it would have been impossible either way.
(Even after you learned of my real personality, you still treat me like some goddess, huh.)
You might like gal games, but Himeno Miina is still Himeno Miina, so she’s my eternal heroine.
(D-Don’t just blurt out embarrassing stuff like that…Why can you make my heart skip a beat this easily even though it’s not my real body…)
Miena covered her mouth, and cast her face down. So, I learned some new information about my heroine, but what am I supposed to do now?
(Ah, r-right. We’ll continue from here on out. Especially with this valuable information.)
Was it that valuable of information…?
(Itsuki-kun, you haven’t realized? My real body called you ‘Saotome-kun’, remember? That means the distance between the two of you has shrunk.)
I see! When you meet someone for a few times, it’ll make you more familiar with them!
(From now on, we’ll show off your existence to her as well. Alright! Today may have been a coincidence, but we’ll go on the offensive on Monday!)
Miena’s eyes lit up, as she formed a fist. She’s full of motivation. Huh? I’m the one who has to do the acting right!? I feel nervous just from thinking about it!
Monday morning arrived.
(Good morning~!)

I heard my favorite heroine alarm from above my head. However, since I woke up an hour earlier than usual, I wasn't too happy about that. Morning over there.
(No motivation as always~ Come on, feel the excitement!)
She sure seemed like she was enjoying herself, floating through the air like that. You really shouldn't be asking me to feel the excitement this early in the morning, or you'll regret it.
(Exactly, exactly! You need some revitalization, Itsuki-kun. Today, you'll be talking with my real body today, so let's both do our best!)
Oh yeah, that reminds me. My stomach suddenly started to hurt. Without any unforeseen accident, I don't think I can talk to her…But, I have Miena with me…No, Miena is possessing me, so it's fine!
(Just leave it to me! If we get a good flag going today, there's a good chance a row of events will follow after!)
I was feeling a bit scared hearing Miena use gal games vocabulary so nonchalantly, but I could only do it.
(Now, let's go at full speed today!)
Like this, my 6th day with Miena started.
I went to the classroom, and right upon sitting down at my desk, my intracerebral strategy meeting with Miena started. I sat at my window seat, with Miena sitting on the window frame.
(It's not that big of a deal. During lunch break, right before my main body goes to eat lunch with my friends, you'll call out to her, asking if you can eat lunch together.)
Not happening! No no no no no! What are you talking about!? Maybe I shouldn't put my faith in you after all!
(It'll be fine, let me tell you. Since I always eat lunch with my female friends in the courtyard, you just have to catch and invite me before that.)
Why are you just progressing this whole thing without listening to me? Do I not have any right in this? By the way, the group of people who eat lunch on the courtyard are pretty much the top of the school caste. I am not even allowed to approach the courtyard, as I am nothing but trash.
(You're using some messed up logic again, you know? It's everybody's freedom where they eat. Why not just invite Shouma-kun and eat lunch in the courtyard another time? It's easy.)
What do you mean 'It's easy', huh? Don't make it sound so simple.
"Itsuki, suuup!" Shouma came to greet me.
"Sup."
(Boys really are weird at times. Why not greet each other with a smile?)
I don't want to become a male student like that. I don't want to be some idiot who progresses with that and stands out like a weirdo. Once you stand out in class, it's hard to get back into your comfortable position. In my case, I probably sunk a bit too much into the class.
(Seriously, what is this menial thinking…)

If I put myself down, another person gets put up above me. I feel happy about thinking that way.
(You're not being cool at all, okay.)
Yeah yeah, gotcha.
(But, that does make sense. I might need to change the plan up a bit.)
Plan? Stop, you're genuinely terrifying me. I just got on the defensive because you suddenly told me to invite Himeno Miina to eat lunch together, and I ended up acting too arrogant, so I'm sorry please forgive me.
(For now, let's just spend lunch break as always, okay.)
"Itsuki, what's been going on with you? You're just staring outside the window."
"Eh? Ahhh, yeah, sorry, I was just thinking about some stuff." I gave Shouma a vague response, when classes for the morning started.
Along with my classmates seriously listening to class, I was just mentally practicing for lunch break. A few seconds after the chime for lunch break rang, all the students who were frantically running their pens along their notebooks as they copied the contents on the blackboard stormed out of the classroom to reach the school store fastest. On the exact opposite of the spectrum, I was continuing my intracerebral strategy meeting until the very limit. And then, once the faithful bell rang, the students entered their usual lunch break.
(Alright! We're heading over to class 6!)
It seems like I wasn't granted this normality, sadly enough. Am I seriously going over there…I feel like my heart is about to explode just thinking about it…
"Oi, Itsuki, where are you heading off to? Aren't we gonna eat lunch together?" Shouma called out to me from the corner of the room, munching on his convenience store bread.
According to the information I got, Himeno Miina brings homemade lunch with her, made by her Mom.
(H-How do you know about that!? Your information network is honestly terrifying…but I can't help admiring that.)
"Ahh, well, I have some business to attend to, so eat lunch without me!"
"Seriously? Eating lunch alone in our classroom is just depressing, you hear me!"
I don't particularly care about that comment of Shouma. Unlike me, he actually has a lot of friends. He probably won't end up eating alone at all. If anything, there's a bigger chance that another friend would eat with him, and I'd end up as the loner.
(That sure is some negative thinking…What about just eating lunch all together…?)
Suddenly getting along with strangers is like a hero's exam. A test that requires courage is definitely not something I'm putting up with. I want to live together in a village with cows for the rest of my life. Animals are great, they won't betray me.

(Why are you suddenly talking about cows…?)
…Wait, hold on. I'm going to invite Himeno Miina in a bit, right?
(Yup, that's right. That's why you're heading over to class 6 right now.)
Rather than this being a hero's exam, it's like I'm going to attack the last boss, the Demon Lord!?
(Hold on! Who are you calling the Demon Lord?!)
No no no no no, I'll get killed for sure! At least let me fight a slime first! I haven't leveled up enough!
(Don't be like that. Look, we already made it to my classroom.)
We made it to the Demon Lord's castle…How am I supposed to defeat that with a wooden stick and pot shield in hand? I wasn't hoping for a weird roleplay like this…
(If you don't hurry up, my real body will leave!)
Damn it, to hell with all of this! I can only put my faith in my allies who are also the hidden boss! I set foot inside the Demon Lord's castle. As expected, the atmosphere of the monsters around me can't compare to the beginner dungeon I was just in.
(Hey! They're all nice people in here, don't treat them like some evil guys!)
I ignored the hidden boss' words, and headed for the seat in the furthest back, currently inhabited by the Demon Lord.
(Now, go forth young hero! Talk to the Demon—No, talk to me!)
Reaching Himeno Miina's seat, I had gathered the attention from the monsters around me. Makes sense, since some boring mob guy like me appeared in front of this school's idol. If I was a mere onlooker here, I probably would have already thrown an insult at myself. I won't allow any worthless insect to cling to Himeno Miina. However…
(H-Hey, are you okay!? Your heartbeat is getting painfully fast! That's not normal, no matter how nervous you may be!)
Right now, I'm a worthless insect. The unpleasant atmosphere in the classroom only led my heart to race faster. Because of the high-level monsters' gazes, my HP was getting lower and lower. And right then, the Demon Lord caught on to my appearance. As a result, my heartbeat grew faster as my HP shrunk.
(Awa…awawawawa, oh no, it won't stop…!)
Hidden boss! Pull yourself together! W-What should I do!?
(Um…ehm…ahhh…)
As even the hidden boss panicked, the beauty in front of me opened her mouth.
"Ah! S-Saotome-kun!?"
"Eh!? No, well, um! Basically, uh…"
(Hey! You're way too nervous! Your heart is going to explode…!)
"H-How can I…help you?" Himeno Miina asked me, clearly confused.
On top of that, the monsters around me were giving me dubious gazes. Ahh, I want to die.
"W-Well, um! T-The thing is, t-t-today…"

I was biting my tongue too much, I didn't even know what I was saying anymore. I want to die.
(Y-You can do it! It's just me! There's no need to be nervous!)
"……?"
(Hey, me! Don't be looking at him like that and take a hint!)
Miena slapped her hands on the desk of Himeno Miina. It didn't create any sound, but I could feeling her anger.
"T-T-Today…l-l-lunch…!?"
"Hime~ Let's hurry up to the courtyard, we don't have that much time~"
There, a friend of Himeno Miina ignored me, and called out to her.
(Ah! Kii-chan, now is not the time, so don't interrupt us!)
"Come on, don't space out like this, let's go?" The girl called Kii-chan urged Himeno Miina even further.
"Ah, but…" Himeno Miina showed me a complicated expression, and seemed to be troubled about something.
(What are you acting like that for, me!? There's an important visitor right in front of you, you can't just ignore him!)
Miena was complaining about her main body. She even tried to slap herself on the cheeks, but her hand was met with nothing but air.
"I-I'm sorry, I need to get going, so…If you need something from me, I'll be willing to listen later."
Since my HP ran out completely, I could just stand there in a daze.
(Ahh, don't leaveeee! Don't leave me heeeere!)
Since Meina is unable to leave my side, she merely stretched out her hand towards the leaving Miina.
After I returned to my own classroom, I finally got a grip on myself, and returned to reality. Heh…hehehhe…guhehehe!
(W-What's wrong, did you completely break now!?)
It's a great success! I managed to talk with Himeno Miina!
(That wasn't any success at all! You failed miserably!)
No doubt about it, my communication skill has gone up. Unlike before, I actually started talking to her. In this regard, this couldn't have ended any better.
(That's…just your imagination. And, how was this a success?)
Just like during this morning, Miena sat on the window frame, questioning me. The only difference compared to before is that she had her arms crossed, giving me a sharp glare. I mean, Himeno Miina promised that she would hear me out later, right?
(I think that was just lip service.)
You again with your jokes~ This means I can come talk to her again, yes~?
(You're not wrong, but I doubt that this raised her affection towards you or anything.)
Huuuh!? She's not just giving me special treatment because I acted before my rival?

(There’s no rival to begin with. Nor do I have any male friends. I wouldn’t give special treatment, okay.)
I know that. If someone like that existed, I would crush them—in my head.
(You really are possessive, Itsuki-kun…Sorry to ruin your mood, but that communication method just now wasn’t nearly good enough.)
That’s…yes, I’m aware. But, this is also your fault, Miena! You said you’d give me advice, so I challenged the impossible. **Sniff**.
(Don’t just start crying. I know that I messed up…But, with your heart racing like that, my head wouldn’t think straight.)
Did you finally understand the feelings of an unpopular boy who sucks at communication?
(To think I’d experience that towards myself. It sure feels weird to be nervous in regards to my main body…)
Not to mention that I’m eating lunch all alone now. When I gazed outside the window, I could perfectly see the courtyard. Ahaha, I can hear Himeno Miina’s cheerful voice. And I’m up here, all alone.
(Why do I feel so irritated now…geez. Itsuki-kun, you’re not alone at all, you have me, right?)
To the people around me, I’m still as much of a loner. Seeing no other option, I stuffed the ‘Tastes better when warm’ cold bread into my mouth.
As I was starting my lonely lunch…
“Itsuki~ Is it true that you invited Hime out to lunch?”
(Ah, it’s Rion-chan! She’s wearing her hair in a ponytail now! So cute~!)
While her ponytail swayed left and right, Rion approached me. She sure picked up on that fast. Apparently Rion would tie up her hair like this when eating lunch. I wasn’t interested at all, so I never even realized. Also, it’s rare for her to call out to me during lunch. Maybe because Shouma ain’t here?
“Information sure spreads quickly…This literally just happened…”
(To think we’d jump into a sudden event like this!? What to do…)
Miena-san, your defeated aura from just now has completely vanished, you know that? There’s flowers blooming on your face, what even is going on.
“Nakagawa-kun went to eat lunch at another class, you know?”
“Yup, knew that.”
“So, you got rejected by Hime, now eating lunch all on your own, huh.”
“So what? Just leave me alone.”
(Worst possible choice! Now, you should eat lunch together with Rion-chan!)
Like hell.
“Hime’s got her own reasons, so it makes sense she would reject a sudden invitation like that.”
(Look! Now even her affection towards me has gone down! There’s no way I would reject the invitation of someone who saved me!)
I mean, you sure did though?
(Hmpf!)

Miena-san was pouting in annoyance.
“Not like I was bothering you or anything, what do you have to do with this?”
“Aren’t you lonely eating lunch all on your own? T-Then, the two of us could just…”
“Itsuki-nii~ Let’s eat lunch together!”
Before Rion could even finish her words, the door to the classroom slid open, and Himari stormed inside. Because of her sudden appearance, my other classmates were looking at her in confusion. Can’t blame them, Himari’s a kiddo from the middle school division after all.
“Hey, Himari! You’re a middle school student, so you can’t just come over here!”
“There’s no wall between me and Itsuki-nii!”
“But there’s a wall between the middle and high school division. You can’t just break through that wall easily, so go back to your classroom.”
Why are you suddenly in such a bad mood, Rion-nee? Since the usual bother is gone, I thought I could spend some time with Itsuki-nii~”
(Good for you, Itsuki-kun. You’re so popular.)
Ahh, geez. Can’t I even eat my lunch in peace?
(By the way, with bother, is she talking about Shouma-kun?)
Yeah, it seems like Shouma took a liking to Himari, though she apparently sees him as nothing but annoying. He checks out girls indiscriminately after all.
“Ah, it’s Himari-chan! What’s this, did you come here to meet me?”
Look, Shouma’s back.
“Urk, the bothersome insect is back! Time to run!”
Upon hearing Shouma’s voice, Himari ran out of the classroom. Like a storm, she arrived and left in one heartbeat…Ahh, geez. Give me back my calm lunch break. This is all your fault, Miena.
(Making it my fault again!?)
In the end, all I managed to do was fill my stomach, the rest of lunch break being plagued with failure.
During the lessons of the afternoon, I was discussing the results from today’s lunch break, and our plan of future actions.
(Looking at your exchange with my real body today, I finally understood. Suddenly inviting me out to eat lunch together was too high of a hurdle.)
I’m glad it only cost me half my honor as a man for you to understand that.
(Yup, now it really set in.)
If it’s with any other boy, I can still manage, but when it comes to a girl… especially Himeno Miina, my cells just start raising screams of terror.
(So rather than liking me, it’s more that you’re bad at dealing with me?)
That’s not true at all! I admire you to the point I fantasize about you all the time!
(H-Hearing that this upfront sure is embarrassing…Also, why can’t you just interact with me like you would in your fantasies?)

That’s impossible!
(Alright, I think I might have messed up my order. I was careless of the protagonist’s status.)
Protagonist? Status? Are you talking about a galge again?
(In order to properly raise flags, you need to raise your own parameters.)
She’s progressing the story again without telling me anything…
(I got it, so let’s move on to the second stage of our heroine conquest strategy!)
Apparently we made it past the first stage, without me even knowing what it was about…

Chapter 3: Would you like to change your route?

Upon returning home from school, I immediately received a lengthy explanation about this second stage of the heroine conquest strategy. Honestly speaking, I didn't have the foggiest clue as to what I was even being told.
(Like I said! In order to raise the affection of your heroine-in-conquest towards you, we need to raise the protagonist's stats first!)
I get that with the heroine-in-conquest, you're surely talking about Himeno Miina, but who's supposed to be the protagonist?
(You of course, Itsuki-kun!)
When did I turn into the protagonist?
(Did you ever play gal games, Itsuki-kun?)
I played one that I borrowed from a friend a long time ago.
(Why did that not turn into your sole reason for existing?)
Not my thing, honestly. In gal games, you proceed through the story in the position of the protagonist, right? The girls on screen are talking past the screen, directly to me, right?
(Well, duh. That's the real thrill of a gal game. It makes you feel like you're the protagonist of your own story.)
…Yeah, that's the problem. Even when it's in-game, I get nervous talking to girls, so I wouldn't even know what action to take.
(T-That sounds severe…I didn't think the situation was this dire…)
With manga or novels, the story progresses without any input on my end, so there's no problem. I just have to flip the page, and enjoy the rest. Not to mention that most stories end with a happy end through the protagonist's actions. But, gal games are different. If I don't go along with the girl's interests and hobbies, I won't make any progress. That sounds like too much of a pain, honestly. If my thoughts get denied and I get rejected in-game, I'd just live on with the shock. Not even being able to be popular in a game that is built for you as the player, I'd be super depressed.
(Maybe you're like me, and you feel a sense of realism from gal games? You have talent for it, I'm telling you!)
What kind of talent is that supposed to be?! So, tell me…since Himeno Miina is playing the gal game you've been wanting to, and since you can't

play it because you're stuck with me…are you trying to create some real-life gal game? Are you just using me as a toy?
(You only realized now? But, you're not a toy, you're the playable character, or the protagonist. Since I'm the heroine you're trying to conquer, it's no biggie at all. It might be a gal game that's easy to clear, but I won't relax!)
"This ain't a gal game, alright!?" I screamed towards the transparent girl.
If this was some romcom, this would be the time where you'd get lovey-dovey flirting scenes between me and the heroine, but as much as it pains me to say it, I can't even touch this girl in front of me.
(Ah, you suck as a protagonist.)
Crap, at this rate, I might get forced along Miena's weird plan!
(This being the case, let's raise your abilities as a protagonist first~)
This ain't a game, so I doubt things will go that smoothly for you, alright.
Also, I'm not really asking for that, nor does anybody need me doing that, so isn't it fine? Ah, I said that out of habit again, I should work on that.
(It seems like there's some cracks forming on your shell, Itsuki-kun. Hehe.)
I don't want to forcefully be changed by someone else. If it happens naturally, or out of my own desire, then it's fine. When it's a natural kind of change, I might not even realize it myself.
(You really treasure yourself a lot, Itsuki-kun. You're like a helicopter parent.)
The world is a cold and dangerous place after all. I myself need to at least be kind to myself.
(Yet, you immediately put yourself down all the time. What was your plan with that, making other people feel better about themselves? Isn't that just a facade so that you can get drunk on this feeling of servility?)
Stop, don't just see right through me.
(Sorry to be so strict with you. But, if I want to get back to my original body, I need you to work hard yourself, Itsuki-kun…Why not make this the perfect trigger for you to reach your ideal high school life?)
Miena now spoke with a more serious tone and expression compared to before. Trigger…huh. What if, through my actions, I managed to get along with Himeno Miina? There's the case with Miena, and I don't think that staying like this will do me any good in the long run. Leaving aside the whole gal game thing, if I have Miena's support, it won't hurt to…No, I can only do this, right?
(That's the spirit! There hasn't been any heroine I have failed to conquer so far, so it'll be an easy victory this time around as well!)
Easy victory…After you announced that whole heroine conquest strategy nonsense, we've only been failing, you know? Also, why do you even like gal games that much?
(Hehehe, you finally asked. The main charm of gal games that I enjoy is the fact that the true feelings of the appearing characters directly reach me, and that my efforts always pay out!)
…I think I shouldn't have asked. It's like I flipped a weird switch.

(I told you before, but in reality, girls don't really express their honest feelings at all. If we did, our current relationship might break down after all. You can't mess up the group of people you're a member of.)
Since I'm not part of any group, that's just beyond me.
(We also stay quiet when it comes to boys and our relationships. It'd be awful if two girls happened to like the same boy after all. If that happens, one of the two would generally keep their feelings a secret, because fixing a relationship that already has cracks in it is quite difficult. Girls love to hold grudges after all. It's much more common for us to act like any clash or conflict just didn't happen.)
Since I don't even have any person I could clash against like you're saying, that's just beyond me.
(However, gal games are different! Even if I chose one girl to go for, the other girls still spend time with me, and we all get to play and have fun! They support me and the heroine, and they'll generally forgive any cheating. Frankly put, they're very open-minded! Of course, some games don't go that way, but most of the time all the girls have their own charm, so as long as I don't betray them, they won't hurt me either!)
Isn't that because the protagonist is a boy?
(Not. At. All! That doesn't have anything to do with it. They're facing me with their honest feelings, which is why I can be honest with them myself.)
Rather than your true self, you're just the player character, the protagonist, right…
(Anyway! Childhood friends or little sister characters are the best. They're the closest to me, and understand me the most, and right when I think that this relationship will never break apart, another main heroine appears.)
Now I feel a bit scared, knowing that you have these kinds of feelings towards Rion and Himari…
(When I call out to another heroine, or play with them, the childhood friend and little sister suddenly get all jealous~ Maybe they finally realized their own feelings? Or, maybe they'll support me when moving onto a different route? Even after everything ends up complicated, they continue to keep our current relationship! It's just marvelous!)
Yaaaaaawn…Oh man, it's not even late, and I already feel sleepy.
(On top of that! The efforts you put into yourself directly correspond to your success in the game. As of late, most gal games have protagonists that can't do anything on their own, and still end up popular. Before, when playing a gal game, you had to raise your own skill depending on the tastes of the heroine you wanted to conquer!)
When is she gonna end this…
(The protagonist basically picks his choices depending on the heroine's tastes. When you pick the best possible choice, you get to talk with the heroine, and get valuable information out of her. By stacking all this small stuff, you can eventually reach the position of being the heroine's lover. It's vastly different from the usual 'Ahh, he hit on me at the beach, and we just

started dating, but broke up soon after~’ okay! There’s no superficial pretend-love!)
I wasn’t listening until the end, but aren’t you just dissing Shiraishi-san at this point?
(N-No! I wouldn’t just talk badly behind her back! T-This was just a coincidence. Also, listen to me all the time, will you!)
Isn’t a game just another type of pretend-love.
(No! It’s pure love! Love and friendship!)
What about that whole cheating part?
(You don’t need to listen to the small details!)
Alright, I get it. I fully understand that you’re a gal game fanatic. But, let me say one thing.
(What~?)
There’s no way the idol of the school would devote herself to an average male student. That’s not realistic at all. Reality and gal games are different, you get me?
(Dun get it!)
Damn it, her thought process halted completely. Also, I don’t even want to become a protagonist.
(I’m looking forward to tomorrow~ It’s fine, I’ll make you the best possible protagonist, Saotome Itsuki. Since the heroine herself will give you advice, it’ll be a won race before it even starts.)
…Right, I forgot. I’m being forced into an actual gal game that’s happening in reality.
(Regarding our conquest this time, it’s a bit more of an old-school style. Since we understand the hobby of the heroine, we now have to raise your status as a protagonist.)
So that’s what you were talking about with the second stage of the strategy. It finally clicked for me.
(We’ll now judge the protagonist’s situation, and close the gap between you and the heroine’s tastes.)
My situation…basically, my specs, right? My grades are in the lower half, my physical abilities are in the upper part of the lower end. As for my style, just put me at rock bottom. Regarding my face…you judge that, Miena. Ah, actually, I’m scared. Even if you’re rotten you’re still Himeno Miina.
(I’m not rotten at all! I already guessed your study level and physical abilities from your grades at school. Regarding your style, you’re not that far down, I think. As for your face…you’re short-haired, so you should be fine.)
She spoke like a mother closely inspecting her daughter’s boyfriend, checking every part of me. As for Miena’s clothes, she was still wearing the school’s uniform. However, she had taken off her flower hair accessory, getting her hair a bit more open compared to her main body, which made her feel a bit more casual. Her face was still the same as Himeno Miina’s, so she’s as cute as ever, hehe~

(What are you grinning for like that? Don’t act all high up on a horse just because I was praising you a bit.)
A-As if! Also, how is my hair related to my face?
(Can’t help it, everybody has their own preferences when it comes to people’s faces. I can’t just tell you good or bad. Though I personally would say that as long as you keep it hygienic, everything’s fine. Since you don’t play any games all night, your face is somewhat refreshed, and it leaves a positive impression on me.)
Eh, so you’re saying that my face is good enough?
(Hm? I mean, I don’t see any problem with it. Though, this is also just my personal impression.)
Isn’t his personal impression super crucial right now!? If you, Himeno Miina, like it, then there’s no problem with it, and even if a lot of other girls like it, there’s no meaning if Himeno Miina doesn’t.
(Now that you mention it…Hold on, isn’t this gal game a bit too easy? Or, am I just that easy of a heroine…?)
Himeno Miina is an easy heroine…!? Like hell that’s the case! I know just how many boys confessed to her during the first-term alone!
(I expected nothing less from your sources. But, there’s a proper reason for that. After all, all the boys that confessed to me didn’t even know anything about me. Being confessed to without the person knowing who I truly was, that’s just the same as being hit on, you know? It’ll just end up with us dating for a bit, and then breaking up again.)
You’re dissing Shiraishi-san again, right?
(Shiraishi-san doesn’t have anything to do with this! S-She’s a good person…okay?)
I thought she was one of the people you were hiding your true self from?
(It can’t be helped, reality often doesn’t go the way we want it to. I don’t plan on actively leaving the group I’m in. I want someone I can be honest and straightforward with, but it’s easier said than done…)
So that’s Miena’s…No, Himeno Miina’s true problem. Being independent is an admirable thing, but being alone means being lonely, with solitude as the final straw. I guess even our idol Himeno Miina is afraid of ending up all on her own. That’s probably why I should start building a relationship where she can put trust in me.
(Exactly. You can only go with the usual procedure, and keep at it.)
So, what should I do for starters?
(The first goal is to exchange contact information with me. Since you both know each other’s names and background, it’s the most orthodox step to take.)
That sounds less like a step and more like climbing Mt. Everest…Let me start with a mountain here in the neighbourhood…
(I mean, I know my own contact address, but there’s no meaning in telling you like this. You have to make my main body give it to you out of her own desire.)

I don’t think that, with my current status, I can manage to exchange my contact address with Himeno Miina.
(You did save me before, so she has that affection for you, not to mention that it’s just your contact address. If anything, if you were to interact with me this way, I probably would have asked myself.)
Seriously!? Maybe I can actually do this?
(However, that’s solely regarding my interests, okay? If we get your studies to an average, it might raise the chance of success.)
Basically, go up one step? That’s doable. Getting the top of the class will be impossible for sure, but if it’s getting to an average level, I might be able to do it with a bit of effort. Although I really hate words like average and effort.
(You can do it for sure, Itsuki-kun! The biggest problem is how you interact with the real me.)
Yeah, I expected as much. Maybe I can’t even fix that for the rest of my life.
(You technically just have to get used to it, but for that, you need to talk to girls. If you do that, you’ll end up suspicious. It’s a vicious cycle, right? If so, then you just have to practice with me.)
What’s this gal game otaku talking about, I don’t get it.
(Basically, I’ll be acting like the me I always show at school. If you keep talking with me that way, you’ll eventually get used to it despite being awkward in the beginning. It’s even more efficient since I am your target after all.)
Rather than this being practice, it’s like I’m being thrown into the real deal right away. Aren’t I just repeating the main deal over and over? What if I get a heart attack?
(It’s fine, it’s fine. With enough practice, you’ll be fit for the real match with your techniques, and with more studies and exams, you’ll figure out the tendencies plenty. On top of that, it’ll feel like the real deal, and you can use your experience to improve for the next time. There are some things you can’t learn with just practice alone.)
You make it sound so simple. This is why self-confident people are such a chore. Well, that means I have to now focus on my studies for the exams next week.
(That’s right! I’ll help you, so let’s both do our best!)
With this, Miena and I set a new foot onto our heroine conquest strategy.
The following week, on Monday during the midday. Ever since we moved to the second stage of our strategy, I’ve been studying earnestly. Yesterday it was six hours total, and today I got up at 6am to study some more, getting up to a total of ten hours with small breaks in between. I feel like I’m going a bit too far here, am I some examinee?
Still, I wonder why, a faint glimmer of joy has been growing inside of me. Maybe it’s all thanks to the existence of Miena who’s with me.
(Doesn’t seem like you have any problems with math, so you should be able to get an average grade.)

Aiming for the bare average sure sounds pathetic, but that's about the best I can do.)
(Aiming for a perfect grade would be too much. With things like these, working on it day by day and slowly raising your grades is much more fun.)
That sounds like a true gamer, alright. Then again, from a cheat character's view like hers, this is like she's training an NPC. Am I just being trained like an animal?
(Gal games have those elements in them after all. I've been pointing out that the cute girls are a big charm, but the protagonist working hard behind the scenes is just as great.)
I personally prefer isekai stories where the protagonist ends up overpowered with some cheat-like ability.
(That doesn't exist in real life, you know. Only after you put some real effort into it, you can taste this fulfillment. It's the same with clubs. Why not join the badminton club?)
Hell no. I don't want my precious time to be stolen by some club.
(I see, what a shame. I was thinking maybe we'd get to play some mixed doubles~)
M-Mixed doubles!? …**Gulp**, maybe it might be worth investing some of my personal time after all?
(Itsuki-kun, you're way too easy of a protagonist…)
While discussing this and that, I slowly moved through the tasks at hand, and when I was stuck with something, I had Miena help me. I heard that teaching others efficiently requires a vast amount of knowledge and grasp of the topic, but that's the top of our year student for you, I guess. If the real Himeno Miina were to teach me face-to-face like this, I surely wouldn't be able to focus properly.
In that sense, I'm glad Miena's with me. With a bit of banter, I'm making good progress through my studies. After that, I also made it through modern literature, biology, and English.
(I'm not giving you the answers during the test, okay? Cheating isn't fair for the others, and I don't want to mess up your focus either.)
It's fine, I somehow feel confident this time around. I've been studying this hard, so I should be able to get better grades compared to my first term when I didn't do anything. I didn't even realize the time had moved to 9pm because I was so focused.
(Let's leave it at that for today. If you stay up too long, it'll just drain your energy for the next day. Getting enough sleep is important for a healthy student, so you'll have to get up at 6am instead, as that's more efficient. We'll do one last chap before the exam.)
I guess Himeno Miina is indulging in this kind of lifestyle as well? Thinking that we get up at the same time made me break out in a faint smile.
The following morning at roughly 6am, Miena woke me up, and we went through the questions that might appear on the exam. And then, the real deal arrived. Oh? That modern literature question is something Miena

corrected when I did my summer homework. If she hadn't done that, I probably wouldn't have been able to solve this question now.
Math next. Oh yeah, that question I solved this morning with just different numbers. The formula to solve this problem is the exact same even. Damn, I've never felt such a successful response during my exams before! Going at this pace, the exams ended, and afternoon arrived.
(Good work today! How's your gut feeling?)
Honestly, I'm fairly confident right now.
(Just kidding~ I've been watching you the entire time after all, so I know.)
S-So, what do you think? Can I get a good grade here?
(Well…I-I'll just have you wait for the official grades to come out instead~)
She clearly stuttered there. You're clearly not confident at all. Normally, I wouldn't care much about exam results, but this time, it's different. It's an important exam that's the first step towards my Himeno Miina conquest. I can't be tripping and falling at the very beginning. Miena's attitude irks me a bit, but I do want to get closer to Himeno Miina. If the person herself gives me advice like this, things should work out, right? Still, it is a bit fishy.
Two days later, we received the answer sheets back, giving us the results. By the way, Miena has continued to teach me even during those two days, so I'm taking my studies quite serious….A-And yet…Damn it, why! Why did this happen!? My results at the exam were far lower than I would have expected. I did reach an average grade with math and modern literature, but the rest is still below average. I luckily didn't end up with any failing grades, but this is a huge difference compared to what I was hoping to see.
(This isn't something to be depressed about. If anything, it's weird that you're so down about this. In just a few days of effort, you immediately achieved this much. You're being very rude towards the people who don't have this much success in more time.)
Urk…B-But, I never worked this hard before, so I was hoping for a bit more than this. It's frustrating.
(Being frustrated is an important feeling. To Itsuki-kun, who never really worked towards anything, this must be a first for you, right? Since I hate losing, I feel it all the time.)
Miena is? I didn't expect that.
(During the last Inter High, when I lost in the semi-final, and even lost in the match for 3rd place, I wasn't just frustrated. I was the only one who lost two times in the entire tournament like that. Just remembering makes me want to scream!)
I see, to other people getting the 4th place might have been something amazing, but to the person in question, the frustration of losing two times is far greater, huh. Since I never experienced anything like that, it's a bit hard for me to really grasp that feeling.
(Of course, there's also this satisfying feeling you get after having given it your all. With your exam results this time, you've surpassed what I expected, honestly.)

Seriously? How am I supposed to accept these shitty results? Also, were you expecting me to fail miserably from the start? That's quite interesting to hear.
(Urk…what are you talking about…? I'm just saying that working hard for a few days is plenty. Especially math, didn't you almost end up with a failing grade during the first term? Now you even made it above average, isn't that amazing? How hard do you think it is to make such a progress in a subject you're bad at in a few days?)
…Now that you mention it, you might be right. Math was always the subject I failed the most at, and also the one I invested most of my time in.
(Everybody has their own different goals and efforts they put in. Compared to the few days of effort you put in, Itsuki-kun, you showed sufficient results. What's most important is that you continue this. Be disappointed, be satisfied, as long as you get back to your usual rhythm.)
If you say that, then I guess I should be more confident?
(Continuation is the biggest strength you can have. Rather than caring about me, the habit is much more crucial.)
It's all effort that hopefully raises Himeno Miina's affection towards me. That's the most important part.
(Thinking about it in gal games terms, that's a good thing, but you also need to do this for yourself, Itsuki-kun. The gal game ends if you raise the heroine's affection enough, but you also need to think about your life after you finish the game. You're opening up your possibilities for the future.)
Despite being a gal game freak, she's lecturing me about life? Miena…No, Himeno Miina might be more of a respectable heroine than I previously assumed.
(Me? I'm an easy heroine.)
That's from your point of view, right? To me, you seem like an unattainable flower.
(What, you're embarrassing me now. Whenever I conquered a heroine that was called an unattainable flower, I was filled with a sense of pride and accomplishment. I can't imagine myself standing in that same position.)
You're the sole dictator over that position, you know! Don't tell me…is she not aware of her objective appearance? She stands at the top of the school caste, and isn't even cognitive about it. She probably doesn't even think much of her position in class.
(I know the word caste, okay. It's that class system in the Hindu religion.)
No, well, you're right, I guess. It's like a social class, influencing our student life. It's about who's above and below you.
(…Hmm, even if you have some sort of social class attached to you, I don't think you should be using the word caste.)
Why?
(Caste is like a class system that was solidified, right. It has a negative connotation added to it, meaning that you can't break out of it no matter how hard you try.)

I see. I was using it that way.
(That's why, using hierarchy from top to bottom is much more beneficial, because if you raise your parameters, you can conquer your heroine just fine!)
Hierarchy…Being at the bottom of that sounds equally hurtful…
(You took an important step forward, Itsuki-kun. Now, calling out to me should be no biggie, right?)
Exams aren't fought against another person, so there's no problem for me, but conquering a heroine is different. I can't just use the correct formula to solve the problem. Even if the answer is inside my head, there's a chance that it's the wrong one. I wanna complain to the teacher if that happens.
(You have a problem with my way of teaching, heh?)
No, not at all! Why are you smiling, but your eyes are dead!?
(It's time to go on the offensive this afternoon!)
Y-Yeshhh! As I had yet to mentally prepare myself, afternoon arrived, and I was forced to attack Himeno Miina. She's the last boss of my story, so even if I challenge her now, I can only see this ending the same way as before. Will my efforts really show off?
During the final class of the day, while listening to the teacher, I was confirming the mission with Miena. Our plan was for me to call out to Himeno Miina before she went off to club practice. Honestly speaking, it feels impossible to me. Much much more difficult than getting an average grade in all subjects at least.
(What are you talking about? You're not even inviting her out to eat lunch together, so easy peasy.)
Then, how should I call out to her?
(Do you have club after this? I'm cheering for you~ or something like that? If you try to take it too far, you'll just dig your own grave again.)
I wonder, won't she just treat me like a stalker if I do that…Like, 'Why's this guy constantly talking to me? We're not even that close. Does he like me? Ugh, gross!', you know…
(Do I really seem like the type of awful woman who would do that? There's no person who's this self-focused.)
R-Right. My angel Himeno Miina would not act like that. She's kind and considerate towards everyone, with a high level of tolerance.
(On the surface, that is. Even I can be fed up with human relationships on the inside.)
R-Right, tehe~
(But, I won't suddenly hate you just because you call out to me. Especially Itsuki-kun…will be…fine…**mumble mumble**.)
Even though Miena surely wasn't even listening to the teacher, she suddenly turned towards the blackboard. It might have just been my imagination, but her chees seemed faintly red. I couldn't hear that last part, so could you repeat that for me?
(I-I'm saying that you should be more confident!)

If I could do that, I wouldn't be suffering like this. As I was making fun of myself, the chime for the final class' ending rang. Since I had class duty today, I cleaned the floor until it was squeaky clean, and prepared to head over to the gym hall. The strategy was to wait around there where the girls badminton club was usually practicing, and randomly call out to her on the way to her club.
(It's not that big of a thing you'd call it a strategy.)
On my way to the gym hall, I spotted a crowd of people. It's bound to be a list of the top-ranking people of the last exams.
(Are you not going to check, Itsuki-kun?)
I'm not there anyway. Since I'm ranked 215 out of 315, it doesn't have anything to do with me. As expected, it showed the exam results, the particular subjects and the overall ranking in particular. It clearly is revealing very personal information, but since I'm not on there, I'm safe.
(Doesn't this show the top 50 of every subject?)
That's right, but the top 50 don't have anything to do with me. Let's just go to the gym hall instead.
(Itsuki-kun, weren't you 50th in Math?)
Hearing Miena's words, I stopped in my tracks…Oh yeah, I think so. I pulled a U-turn and checked the paper in question. Running my gaze along the math ranking, I did indeed find my name at the bottom.
"Woah!? Are you serious!?" I accidentally let out a scream.
It was just that shocking of a revelation. Normally, this would have been an event I ignored by simply walking past it, but now my chest was filled with joy.
(Congrats! How's it feel to see the fruit of your labour?)
Ahh, I'm realizing it now, but…you know, I might be a bit…super ultra happy!
(Which is it!? Hehe, now I'm even feeling happy seeing you react that way.)
Miena showed a teasing smile. Her voice and laugh sounded so adorable and lovable, I almost forgot about the whole heroine conquest thing…But wait, doesn't this make me look like I'm at the bottom?
(Then, why don't you aim for the 40th place next time?)
Hearing these words, I next directed my gaze at the upper ranks. Finding the top of the list, I also found Himeno Miina's name. I checked the same for the other subjects, and that fact didn't change for either of these. Just what you'd expect, I guess.
(He he he…Well, that's what I know and love about her, I guess.)
Don't give me that! You are her, right!?
(Now there's still a large gap between us, but one day I'll catch up!)
Just what are you even fighting. But, being a bit more confident before making my way to the gym hall is indeed a big thing. Now, I might even be able to call out to Himeno Miina. I walked down the hallway that connected the school building with the gym hall. There I stood, with my smartphone in hand, waiting for Himeno Miina. Of course, whatever may have been on the

screen at that time, I don't remember. The smartphone is just a tool to make it seem more like a coincidence.
(She should be coming soon. Remember, act natural.)
Just as Miena stated, Himeno Miina and some other students from the girls badminton club were walking towards us, wearing their usual gym clothes. It's the same girls that went home with her before, with even Shiraishi-san. They must have changed in the school's changing room. As with everything else, Himeno Miina in her gym clothes attire was bewitching beyond belief —
(Hey, who cares about that!? Do something about your racing heart, I can't take this aaaaaaah!)
Looking at Himeno Miina, my heart started beating faster. It's like I was witnessing a Pavlov's dogs experiment with me as the dog.
(B-Being nervous towards my real body…I can't get used to this at all, uuu…)
The group of four walked past me, closing in on the gym hall.
(A-Anything is fine, just call out to her!)
"Urk…U-Um, ehm…!" I turned towards the group, clearly desperate.
"Ahaha, that's so funny."
"Right~? …Hm, Hime? What's wrong?
"Ah, well, could you go on without me?"
"Uhh, sure. We'll just put up the net in the meantime~"
The only person who caught on to my voice—to my existence—was Himeno Miina after all. The other three girls left Himeno Miina alone, and disappeared into the gym hall.
(Good job, me!)
"…S-Saotome-kun? C-Can I help you?"
(This reaction…I knew it…)
Miena took a close look at Himeno Miina's face. It was like she could see right through her. That's my support character, she sure is reliable. At the same time, as for me…just being asked that by her had me blank out fully.
"Y-Yesh!? Um…well, your gym clothes…are very cute!"
I was waiting here, in front of the gym hall, just to say that? God, I'm gross. I really want to die right now.
"T-Thanks…"
"Y-Yeah…"
""……""
(W-What is this awkward silenceeeee!)
"U-Um, Saotome-kun? I'm sorry that I didn't get to hear you out during the last lunch break."
"I-It's fine!!"
(Don't suddenly scream like that!)
Himeno Miina must have been taken by surprise because of my outburst, as she stood still.
(Hey! Why am I suddenly so quiet!? Respond properly, me!)

Miena attempted to grab Himeno Miina's shoulders and shake her, but the main body showed no reaction. W-W-W-What should I do!? What am I supposed to do now? Miena, help me…
(I-It can't be helped now that it's come to this. We'll try to accomplish our goal now.)
…Goal?
(Did you forget? You'll exchange your contact address with my real body.)
Right now!? You're asking for too much!
(The girl right in front of you is as defenseless as can be. You need to go on the offensive!)
Impossible…Also, that girl is still you, okay…
(I feel like you can do it right now!)
"U-Um…Ummm!"
"……?"
"C-Contact address! P-Please…!"
Right there, my HP ran out. Whatever happens happens now, ahaha.
(So that's your limit…But, you did well, Itsuki-kun!)
"Contact address? Do you want to…exchange it with me?" Himeno Miina showed a dubious expression, waiting for my response.
"Yesh!"
(Alright! It seems like your intentions got through to her! It's fine now, I can guarantee that!)
On one hand, Miena was confident of our success, whereas Himeno Miina seemed a bit conflicted, her eyes wandering from left to right.
(Eh!? Hold on, what are you thinking, me!? That's not something you'd need to ponder about! The answer is easy and simple, so hurry up and exchange it with Itsuki-kun!)
Miena's victorious pose swiftly changed into a raised fist against her real body. And then, Himeno Miina spoke up—
"……Um, sorry."
"Ah." (Ah.)
She showed a polite bow, and went her way towards the gym hall. I was left all alone, not counting Miena.
(Hold on! Are you kidding meeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!?)
A loud scream coming from Miena made the inside of my head reverberate. It was a scream only I could hear. It seems like she's screaming in my stead. Ahaha, I want to die. Now I fully understand what people mean when they say they were dumbfounded. A cool fall breeze hit my body, as a single cosmos flower flew against my face. Ahh, it's fall already. I can hear the sound of the badminton ball being hit over in the gym hall, nobody giving any attention to me at all. Welp, time to go home…
(……)
Because I was devoid of any emotion, Miena stayed silent. She must be disappointed with me.
"Itsuki~ What are you doing here?"

Right as I was lamenting my entire existence, a familiar voice reached my ears.
“…Nothing at all.”
“It’s rare for you from the go-home club to stick around here. Killing time?”
She must be off to her tennis practice, as my childhood friend had her hair tied up into a ponytail, which shook as she took a peek at my face.
“Got nothing to do with you, Rion. Just go to your club already.”
“Ehh, I’m curious though?”
“It’s my own business what I’m doing and when I’m doing it, right.”
“You’re not wrong, but I saw you call out to Hime, you know~?”
Damn it! Of course she had to see me like that! …Still, we keep running into each other a lot as of late, huh.
“W-What’s it matter? Even I talk to her from time to time.”
Not like you could really categorize that as me talking though.
“Say, Itsuki……Do you like Hime that much?”
“Shut up. Y-You know, Himeno Miina is like an idol at this school, right? From an objective point of view, I just admire her, that’s all.”
(Hmmm?)
There, Miena started pouting for some reason.
“Well yeah, Hime stands out a lot, and she sure is cute. I can’t help but admire her myself.”
(That’s not true at all…She’s the worst, you know that?)
Miena was praised by her beloved Rion, but couldn’t fully show it.
“Rion, you’re not acquainted with Himeno Miina, right?”
“Eh?! W-Well…I never directly talked with her. But, why do you know about that, Itsuki?”
“J-Just guessed. I figured that even from a girl’s point of view, Himeno Miina does stand out, right?”
“Of course she does. Top 4 in the nationals, getting first place in all subjects across the board, that’s just impossible! Can’t she share some of that talent with the rest of us? Haha!” Rion laughed like she was poking fun at herself.
“Maybe she’s just working hard without anyone realizing?”
“…Well, I do think that she probably struggles a bit with human relationships and all that…I guess?”
“Eh, you can tell, Rion?”
“What’s that supposed to mean? Girls have a lot of problems, you know~ I bet a lot of girls are jealous of her. Not to mention…everybody has their own package to carry…I realized that recently!”
(Rion-chan…!)
Miena visibly cheered up after hearing Rion’s words. Her voice has become a bit more cheerful now. It’s crazy to think that Rion cheered up the person in question without even knowing. Even so, despite me having watched Himeno Miina across the entire first term, I had no way of understanding her true feelings. To think Rion realized it before me…Well, it’s not like she has it all figured out.

“Never would have guessed you were thinking about this sort of stuff, never seemed like you do after all.”
“And you’re as rude as always! Just to let you know, but you should probably think about this stuff a bit more. If you call out to her like some creepy stalker like that, let alone Hime, every other girl would run away in an instant.”
So she saw me from the very beginning!? It seems like I was too focussed on Himeno Miina, I didn’t pay any proper attention to the people around me.
“Zip it, I have to think about a lot of stuff myself. Also, shouldn’t you be heading over to your club right about now?”

“Oops, you’re right. Anyway, go get them, champ!”
“……Hmpf.”
“Also, congrats on your 50th place in math.” As her ponytail swayed left and right, Rion made her way towards the tennis court.
(Rion-chan…She’s so cute…!)

On the way home, Miena was oddly quiet. To me, it simply felt like I had returned to my usual life, but I couldn't shake off this odd discomfort.
That night, it was Miena's turn to reflect on her actions.
(…Um, I'm sorry.)
She seemed apologetic, as she lowered her head towards me, sitting on her prime position—my bed—as always. Can you stop reminding me of what happened this afternoon, it still hurts.
(Ahhh, geez! Why did I reject you like that, me!)
I mean, it's probably to avoid the risk of having to deal with a creepy stalker bastard from your neighbouring class, right, ahahaha.
(Of course, I would always reject people if I don't even know them. But, we have met several times now, and I never said no to somebody like that…)
Stop, you're only hurting me even more. My HP are already at 0, okay!?
(It doesn't make any sense…She's a fake…a different person. I wouldn't react that way…)
…You know, being rejected like that, I started thinking. Isn't this a pretty obvious result?
(It's definitely not. I wouldn't reject you just like that. My real body is acting off, for sure.)
From your point of view, it might seem that way, but what about your real body?
(What do you mean? Are you saying that I'm not Himeno Miina after all?)
No no no, I do believe you Miena, especially after everything that happened.
(Then, isn't it weird that the difference in thought process of me here and my real body is this big?)
No, not at all. Ever since the start of the second term, we've pretty much been together 24/7, Miena. We even shared our heartbeat and senses. We went to Akiba together, and worked together behind the scenes. You even taught me at school, and I achieved better results during the exam.
…But, that doesn't mean my feelings and sentiments reached Himeno Miina. In her eyes, I've only been acting suspicious around her. There's no way she would even know that I managed to get into the top 50 in math after almost failing. Miena knows about me. But, Himeno Miina doesn't know a single thing about me. That's just how it is. Being rejected like that, it all started to make sense. I was expecting reality to be kind to me.
(…Hmmm, you might not be too far off. But, I still can't accept this.)
Why? You're just on my side because of our shared memories and time that we acquired over the past two weeks, right?
(N-No! Even after you saved me from falling down the stairs…I was already a bit, you know…**Mumble mumble**.)
She put her fingers together, fidgeting nervously. I couldn't even pick up what she said in the second part. How am I supposed to guess what you're thinking?

(I-It’s fine, as long as I understand it. You’re not wrong, but that still doesn’t explain why I declined exchanging our contact addresses. Even my main body was interacting with you, if only for a bit.)
But, isn’t that way of interacting not good at all?
(It couldn’t be helped that you were acting a bit suspicious like that. But, even with the other three girls around, only she caught on to you and your intentions. Even though we didn’t even call out to her directly.)
You really are turning this into a tactical gal game, huh. Terrifying. Well, speaking from the results, I was denied in the end, so there’s no way but to accept it.
(Urk…why am I so frustrated towards not hearing my own contact address…I feel like an idiot…!)
I’m glad you finally understand what it means to not be a popular guy. Once you go back to your main body, maybe you’ll be a bit more kind to us unpopular guys.
(I understand how hard it is. I also have to accept that I was letting my guard down, thinking it would be easy because it’s me.)
Well, the player character you’re operating is just that useless. I guess we have to raise my stats some more first. Can’t be rushing things.
(Why are you this calm!? You’re suddenly the one rationally analyzing this event instead of me.)
If anything, it’d be unnatural for a guy like me to suddenly get Himeno Miina’s contact information. From the viewpoint of Shouma and the other guys, it’d probably be a lot more believable if the world ended tomorrow.
(You don’t need to care about your evaluation from the people around you. This is a problem between you and my main body.)
And as for that problem, I was rejected flat-out today. Then again, my lack of confidence might be another reason for that.
(Confidence, huh…It’s weird, you seem to be totally fine when talking to your childhood friend though?)
Where did that come from!?
(No reason~?)
I mean, she’s my childhood friend after all.
(Even though you can’t even properly talk with my real body…)
I told you, you’re special.
(Special because you admire me from an objective point of view, huh. I see, I see.)
Urk, always so rebellious towards everything. I’m sorry, alright. I know I’m not good enough. But, I could at least talk with her more compared to before, right? It’s just as you said, I should keep up my work instead of trying to achieve everything at once. It wouldn’t be interesting at all if I could suddenly treat her like Rion.
(Not wrong, but the progress has gone backwards compared to before…)
T-That’s…Uhhh…Ah, I know! It was probably because of her club. Since Himeno Miina had her club to attend to, she didn’t have much time to

properly think it through. She surely just was rushing things because of that, which is why we couldn't talk for long.
(It was just about a few minutes, you know. I'm not that pesky of a person when it comes to my schedule.)
Honestly, you seem very focused on efficiency. Like you're always keeping cost and reward in your head. So rather than talking with me for a few minutes, you'd probably want to hit a few more times in your badminton practice.
(Am I a demon or something? Because of that, you're about to walk right into the childhood friend route…What is my main doing, not even knowing of my own feelings…)
Seeing Miena act this way towards herself was quite absurdly comical.
(…What are you laughing about?)
Oh, not good. I was warned because I couldn't hold back a grin. Her tone was the same when she pointed out any mistakes when I was learning math. Her face was smiling, but her heart wasn't. She clearly is a demon.
(If it was me, I would have taken my time…Geez.)
Miena let out a defeated sigh. It can't be helped, Himeno Miina is on the level of a near-impossible Demon Lord class demonic heroine. I'm not the type of person who could dream to conquer her.
(Rather than a heroine, I turned into the last boss, huh…)
Did you finally understand? There's absolutely no romantic interest to be found.
(It's weird…My reaction doesn't make any sense…)
It does, considering that I'm a mob bastard.
(It's not normal…My attitude compared to last time is vastly different, and vague.)
Not like Himeno Miina?
(Exactly. A reason for that might be that it's you, Itsuki-kun.)
Why would I make a difference?
(Y-You don't have to think that deeply into it! Just me talking to myself, not related to the conquest at all!)
You're probably just blabbering about some weird gal game knowledge, right?
(Don't call it weird, okay. I just know. I wouldn't say something like that. Normally, I would exchange my phone number no problem…I don't get it…)
It was evident that Miena ended up in a bad mood. It's like I've woken an entity that should have been left alone. A wise man stays away from danger, as they say.
(I'm not some entity, nor are you a wise man. It's just…something weird is going on with my main body.)
Seriously? Are we reaching a time limit where you can't return to your main body!?
(Maybe. I never experienced something like this before, so I can't say for certain though.)

At the very least, we can assume that it doesn't influence her thinking abilities. She got her usual first rank in the exams. If anything, my head is slowly turning into a mushed up mess of gal game knowledge.
(What might you be talking about? Well, leaving aside your newfound joy for gal games, isn't there something you realized when looking at my real body today?)
She was as cute as always, that's for sure…Gufufufu…hehehe…
(I wasn't asking about that! Today, my real body was using much more casual language towards you, right? Before, I would always speak as politely as possible.)
Casual language? Did she? I don't remember much because I was just spacing out. Maybe she just judged that she didn't have to be polite towards trash like me? Ah, I want to die.
(There's no way I would act differently just because of that. Remember, I don't even use casual language with girls I'm close with. It seems more like some change in her mental attitude happened over those past two weeks.)
Weren't you using casual language from the very start, Miena?
(Well yeah, after ending up in this kind of situation, what good would being distant do?)
As a result of that, I didn't even know who called out to me in the beginning, yeah. So, what does that mean in terms of progress? She still doesn't want to exchange her contact information with me, but the distance between us shrunk?
(I don't know what kind of change caused this difference in behaviour, but I do think that you've gotten closer. Since I'm saying it, there's no mistaking it.)
I feel like you're just too bugged of a supporting character.
(How rude, I'm the same me as always. My real body is acting off, okay.)
So that means, I should hurry up and try to get closer to her before any more negative impact happens?
(Summed up, that's about it. Our time limit might be closer than we think.)
Guess I can't stay like this forever. Helping Himeno Miina is important, but you are just as important, Miena.
(Eh…T-Thanks.)
My words must have taken Miena by surprise, as she looked at me in shock.
I should probably try and regularly talk to Himeno Miina, so that she doesn't come to hate me. I shouldn't get my expectations up to immediately reach the goal. Everyday conversations are the best. It's still hard as all hell, but better than nothing…
(It seems like your motivation has gone up at least. And, if you end up in a pinch during a conversation, then I have something up my sleeve!)
What, you have like an ace in the hole!? Just use that from the very beginning!
(I can't, it's like a double-edged sword, so I can't just bring that out immediately.)

I got a really bad feeling about this.
(Now that it's come to this, we'll challenge my real body again tomorrow. I'm sure she must feel guilty about having rejected you like that.)
You think that we can still exchange contact information like that?
(Of course, I can see it being possible.)
Asking a girl who already rejected me once again, I feel like this time she'll definitely think of me as creepy.
(Exchanging contact information is the reference for when you made it onto her route. At the same time, if you can't achieve even that, then the conquest is a failure.)
But, since she rejected me once, isn't this already a game over?
(Eh? Being rejected as the protagonist is a common occurrence in gal games, you know?)
What kind of gal game is that supposed to be? I definitely don't want to play that. Can't we just go with a more recent one? The one where I'm popular without even doing anything?
(That's just too boring of a conquest if you manage to get on the route right away. Success comes from effort, and this connects to your confidence. So, we'll aim for that.)
Well, it's true that I might be a bit more confident if I succeeded here. Though, I'd at least like to hear about this hidden trump card you were talking about. I won't know how to react if you suddenly take it out during the real deal.
(It's not that big of a deal to be honest. Basically, you just have to mention my own hobby towards my real body.)
Your hobby? Are you talking about how you're a gal game maniac?
(Phrasing! You're making me sound like some weirdo!)
Alright alright, you're a gal game lover.
(Doesn't feel like you changed much…but, it's better. Anyway, just tell her that you happened to spot her while buying gal games in Akiba before.)
Miena-san? I feel like that's getting close to threatening!?
(That's why it'll be like a last resort. After all, it might end up building greater distrust towards you, and she might stay away from you as a result.)
That's definitely not good! It'll have the opposite effect of what we want to do! It really is too much of a double-edged sword.
(If things work out, she'll think of you as something like an ally, you know? I always wanted friends who shared my hobby. Hearing that you like gal games would be a big boost in likeability, no doubt.)
Of course, if it was any other normal girl, she'd probably be grossed out. Even I would be.
(Grrr…then, why don't you just start playing gal games yourself? That's right! You buy that gal game my real body bought a few days back. If I properly guide you, it'll be easy peasy!)
Don't wanna.
(Why!?)

I told you before, right. I get nervous when playing gal games, and buying it is embarrassing as well…
(I knew it, it's a severe problem. If you even get nervous towards girls in the game, you need to get used to real girls as quickly as possible.)
Isn't it normally the other way around!? For now, we won't use this hidden trump card, alright. I'm glad I asked beforehand, I guess I've gotten used to dealing with Miena now. If only it was that easy for 3D girls.
(For that, we'll go on the attack again tomorrow.)
Ahh, I'm scared. If I get rejected like that again, I might not be able to go to school again.
(I'll cheer you up once I'm back to my main body, so cheer up!)
For a day, an awkward stop was hammered into our conquest strategy, but thanks to the moral support of my hidden heroine Miena, I will once again challenge Himeno Miina tomorrow.
The following day, inside my classroom, as the other classmates were discussing during homeroom, I wasn't even looking at the blackboard, but instead outside the window. Or more accurately, at the direction where Miena was sitting. At school, her most prominent position was on that very window frame. However, she wasn't particularly sitting on it, just floating above it. Why not just make your clothes see-through instead of your entire body, huh?
(We'll be waiting at the gym hall again today, once classes are over. And, make sure not to bring up gym clothes!"
She must have sensed my wicked thoughts, as she gave me an immediate retort, which only reached my ears. Yeah yeah, I got it.
(Grrr…you need to reflect on this sort of stuff.)
Like this, as Miena and I were discussing things in our own world, the atmosphere inside the classroom grew more excited all the same.
"So, do we have any volunteers?" The class representative's voice reverberated through the otherwise quiet classroom.
Our class representative is the honor student type of person, with girly twintails befitting her image. Ever since we got into the second-term, she's gotten used to standing in front of my classmates. In the beginning, she had this role as the class rep pushed onto her, and clearly didn't like it. I couldn't be bothered either, but one person has to do it eventually. Well, I'm sure that getting trust back from her classmates helped out a lot as well.
(…I'm sure she'd be happy to know that you feel this way, Itsuki-kun.)
And yet, Miena was the one smiling in happiness. However, even as the class rep got used to her work, nobody would offer a response. The classroom was only filled by my classmates, and although somebody was always making noise in class, now nothing but an eerie silence reigned. It's almost like they all turned into mob characters, hiding inside the crowd.
Don't just steal my identity as a mob character, will you.
(So then, what about this one mob over here?)

Huh? Me? Don’t joke around. There’s no way I’d take responsibility for our class’ exhibition. Today’s homeroom was there for us to decide on who would be the leader for the attraction our class decided on to offer during next month’s culture festival. On a side note, a vote lead to it being a haunted house. Since nobody offered to volunteer as the person in charge, it was clear that they all rather wanted to have fun themselves over enabling other people to have fun, I guess. At times like these, would Himeno Miina raise her hand to volunteer, I wonder?
(I wouldn’t. I don’t have the personality to do something like that with passion. However, even so, I would often end up with these roles after all.)
So you’re the type who can’t say no when push comes to shove.
(Yeah…But, since this is my first culture festival, I’m actually looking forward to it. Although…)
Although?
(I really want to play this new gal game, so I can’t be bothered about the culture festival, you know.)
Again with your gal games!? More than the culture festival? You really are the weird one here out of you two…
“If we don’t have volunteers, I won’t mind any recommendations, so won’t anybody please step forth?”
Two female students stood in front of the teacher’s pult, with our homeroom teacher crossing her legs as she sat on a chair in the corner of the room, giving the students a testing gaze.
“Let me ask again, is there anybody who would volunteer to take responsibility for our class’ attraction?” Another girl standing next to the class rep spoke up.
She’s the president of the culture festival execution committee. This role was decided in the first term with a lot of priority. However, now that the actual preparations began, and the real work started, she might have actually begun to regret her decision. At the very least, that’s what her expression showed.
(A great observing eye.)
Mobs act while being conscious of the situation and ranking in class. We can’t get in the way of the protagonists or the heroines. I’m busy with my own role. So, this is a necessary skill.
(What a mob mentality. A professional mob…a pro mob. Wait, you’re the protagonist, Itsuki-kun! Be aware of that, geez!)
Yeah yeah, I get it.
(Today, we’re going to raise a flag with your own heroine, so do your best!)
I got it, I got it. Ahh, I can’t wait to see Himeno Miina in her gym clothes again today.
(You’re talking about that again…? Once I’m back to my main body, you can look at that…No, even now, I’m always ready to…)
Huh? Miena slowly stood up from the window frame. Right as I was confused about what she was talking about, her uniform suddenly started to

turn even more transparent, and—Ehhh!? Her clothes are actually transparent now! I mean, I was thinking about how nice it would be just now, but you can't do this! We're in the middle of the class right now! Well, only I can see it, but that doesn't matter right now!
Various emotions started to dwell up inside of me, and after Miena's were close to appear entirely, what appeared was—A-A gym class uniform!? Without anybody realizing, there stood Miena looking like that. Even though she had been wearing a normal uniform not too long ago, she now changed into an average gym class uniform. In comparison to her normal uniform, she wore short pants, and the legs reaching down from them were long and healthy…even a bit lewd, it's weird.
(H-How…is it?)

Even though a fully-fledged fall had arrived, Miena's cheeks were beet red. Rather than her crimson short pants she was wearing, her face seemed more like a tomato.
(E-Even I can wear gym clothes like this…Although it's embarrassing.)
Her expression was distorted in nervosity and tension. At the same time, I was assaulted by this guilty pleasure of being the only one who gets to see our school's idol in such bashful fashion.
(W-With this, you should be used to it, so don't be nervous when the real me appears looking like this, okay!? You have to pull yourself together for the heroine conquest.)
"Yes, I'll do it!" I answered with full confidence, having stood up with great momentum.
"Ohh? Now that's an unexpected volunteer. Saotome, you want to take care of our class' attraction?" In the middle of the ongoing homeroom, my homeroom teacher stood up, inspecting me.
"Eh? No, um…this is…"
(H-Hey! What are you doing!?)
"Seriously, OtsuOtsu volunteered!"
"Saotome-kun did? You're kidding, right…"
"OtsuOtsu! A surprise to be sure, but a welcome one!"
My classmates were giving me dubious glances. I was only showing my determination for the heroine conquest, and yet I stood up for the one responsible for our class' attraction…N-Now I messed up! Oh no, even the class rep and execution committee president were looking at me in surprise. Although they finally found a candidate, they both had such complicated expressions on their faces.
Is it because it's me? Are they nervous because it's me? That's fine, I don't remember volunteering in the first place! Not at all!
(You say that, but you stood up and proudly declared that you volunteer as a tribute.)
Miena gave me an exhausted look, while still wearing her gym class clothes. Besides here, there was also a student who didn't give me an anxious look, but rather one filled with expectations and admiration—It was Rion. Just when I was wondering what she was about to do, Rion shot up from her chair at a momentum that wouldn't lose to me.
"Um! I'll become the vice supervisor for our class' attraction!"
She actually volunteered as the vice supervisor next to me. Also, did we even have a role like that?
(If she's going to take the job of the vice supervisor, then I'm going to be the assistant of said vice supervisor!)
Don't you join in as well! What about doing your role passionately, huh!? Also, why does the vice supervisor need an assistant!? At least be my assistant instead…
(This clearly is the individual route we're about to enter!)

Who will enter whose individual route!?
(Eh? I'll be entering Rion-chan's route of course.)
Why are you acting as the protagonist now!? Wasn't I supposed to be the protagonist!?
(Ah! Oh yeah, you're right. I'm not the protagonist right now…)
I ignored the depressed Miena, and glanced over at Rion. Why did she suddenly volunteer like that? It makes no sense to me.
(What kind of dense protagonist are you? Being this dense is so old-fashioned.)
I don't really get it, but I think I was dissed just now, right?
(Your reaction just now makes you a perfect protagonist, it's crazy.)
I decided to ignore the gal game otaku who kept rambling on about this nonsense.
"If Shiina-san were to become the vice supervisor, then there wouldn't be a problem I suppose." The class rep sighed in relief, and accepted Rion as a candidate.
Now I really can't pull back from this whole thing anymore, huh.
(The culture festival, huh…This might be a good chance for you to get some more confidence, Itsuki-kun. I'll be supporting you, so why not take this responsibility?)
You make it sound so simple. Even if I actually went along with this whole supervisor thing, the real problem is Rion. Dealing with her means I would have to step into the ring of this class. After all, she's pretty popular here.
(This might be your chance to find a place inside your class, you know?)
Doesn't sound very convincing from the person who literally is at the center of this entire school. Well, if I have your help, then I don't mind. But, I don't want to make more enemies just because I'm getting closer to Rion, nor do I want there to be any weird rumours going around. Also, Rion shouldn't have the time to help with our class…
"U-Um…Shiina-san isn't very good at dealing with scary things, and she doesn't know too much about good horror, so could I request someone else as the vice supervisor?" I asked for permission from the class prez and the execution committee president.
"Itsuki!? What are you—"
(So Rion-chan was bad with scary stuff…that's also cute though.)
Nah, Rion actually likes horror and everything related to it. She's not so fragile who'd get scared by a high school haunted house.
(Fragile…Of course she is, she's a girl after all!)
Because of my words, my classmates' gazes changed to looking at me like a mob again.
"That's a childhood friend for you!"
"OtsuOtsu, you really know a lot about Shiina! You like her or something?"
All of them turned towards me, poking fun at me relentlessly.
(Nope~! Itsuki-kun actually likes…uuhh…me…**Mumble mumble**…)

It sounded like Miena was arguing against them…with a voice even I could barely hear.
“Saotome-kun, who would you like to recommend then?”
I can understand the class rep’s annoyed face, since I pretty much just denied the conclusion of this incident. However, there’s no better person to help me with haunted houses. After all, he’s working part-time at a genuine haunted house. See, the guy who’s resting his head on his desk, sleeping.
“Yes, I’d like to recommend the haunted house professional!”
After that, Rion was removed from her position as the vice supervisor, and I became the one responsible for the class’ haunted house project after my virtuous (?) decision to volunteer. In the end, whether you’re popular in class or not, the thought process of ‘Anybody is fine’ probably is the strongest in this world.
“Itsuki, what is this about?!”
After homeroom ended, Rion walked towards me, as her long hair shook with every move she made.
“Hm? Ah, sorry about that. They ended up getting the wrong idea.”
“No, that’s not what I meant. If anything, I wouldn’t have minded that one bit…Wait, no! Why did you lie and forcefully make me retire as a candidate!?”
(Rion-chan…she’s so cute.)
“Sorry for lying like that. But, you don’t have the time to act as my vice supervisor, right?”
“T-That’s not true! It’s easy peasy!”
“Rion, you have to help with the attraction of your tennis club, right? You must have your hands full with that.”
“Itsuki…you remembered…?”
“You were the one who said you’d be busy. So, leave this to me.”
(I see, a childhood friend’s thoughtfulness, is it. How nice~)
“…Well, whatever. Since you actively wanted to participate this time, I’ll leave it at that! Ehehe~”
“Why are you laughing like that?”
“Don’t mind me~ Just, a lot happened when you were in grade school, so… you know? Since then, you’ve been keeping your distance from other people, and stopped trying to deal with others. That’s why I was a bit worried, thinking that this might have been my fault.”
“How would that be your fault? It was a problem within my family, right?”
“Maybe if I had listened to you more, you know? After all, you did so much for me, and I couldn’t give you anything back.”
“Did I do something for you?”
“Ahh, you’re really saying that now? When I was young, a certain someone forcefully dragged me outside since I was just playing with girl friends of mine, but I can’t quite remember who?”
“Huh? I thought you were praising me, but now it just sounds like you’re blaming me!?”

“You pulled the introverted me out into the outside world, so I’m thankful for that. Not to mention that I got into tennis as well. And yet, you became the introvert instead of me~”
(So that’s what happened…)
She was still hung up on that? Is that why she kept inviting me all the time? Well, the reason I started living in my fantasies rather than the real world isn’t related to Rion though.
“Don’t you worry about me, I’m living my life the way I want to.”
“But recently, you changed a bit, Itsuki. I mean, you volunteered as the supervisor today. It’s like you’re trying to be more active…Ah! But, when it comes to Hime, you should probably think more before you act. Right now, you got no chance at all, Itsuki!”
(That’s not true at all. After all, this is a problem between me and Itsuki-kun, yup yup.)
“N-None of your business. I know what to do.”
Yet, Miena sounded much more convincing than me.
“Well, just let me know if you need some advice in love, I have much more experience than you after all.”
“Eh, really?”
“Hm!? W-Well, yeah. I’ve been…dealing with love for a long time now.”
(Rion-chan…)
“Oh really, I had no idea.”
“E-Enough about me. Regarding Hime, come ask me for advice first, otherwise you’ll just end up hurt!”
Rion behind these mysterious words, and walked away. Why did she suddenly bring up Himeno Miina like that? Are her emotions unstable or something?
(You’re a pretty good protagonist, you know that. I kind of want you to suffer a bit now.)
Why!? For some reason, my support character is emotionally unstable as well now.
(Well, your heart wouldn’t race at all this time, so I’ll let this slide.)
S-Scary…You’re not making any sense. Also, what about next time then…?
“Itsuki~ What were you talking about with Shiina?” Shouma seemed to have finally woken up from his slumber, asking me to gather more information as always.
Well, he surely doesn’t know because of him being asleep all the way through the homeroom.
“Ain’t got anything to do with you, Shouma. More importantly, let’s both do our best for our class and attraction.”
“Huh? What are you talking about?”
“I’m the supervisor, and you became my vice supervisor, so I’m leaving the haunted house to you.”
“Huh!? I didn’t hear about this!”

Since I recommended Shouma, who was asleep, it was decided without his consent. These kinds of things actually get decided fairly smoothly. And, while ignoring Shouma's futile complaints, I simply prepared myself for this afternoon.
Finally, classes ended, as Miena and I stood in front of the gym hall as yesterday. Since I got to see Miena up close in her gym clothes, I surely won't be as nervous again with Himeno Miina today. Still, what a convenient ability that you can just change your appearance like that.
(Doesn't seem like I can just change into whatever I want though.)
Really? So how could you change into gym clothes like that?
(Right now, a great portion of each of us is connected to each other, so if you can imagine it strongly enough, I can change my outer appearance, or something like that.)
So basically, I was that desperate to see Himeno Miina in her gym clothes… how embarrassing.
(I'm the one who's supposed to be embarrassed! G-Geez…I wear these clothes like any others, but to think you were looking at me this way…)
I'm sorry…
(Well, whatever. As a gal game protagonist, you get a perfect score.)
Are you making fun of me again!?
(More importantly, this is weird. My real body isn't coming at all today.)
We've been waiting this entire time, but the target showed no signs of appearing. Yeah, something's off for sure.
(I don't think I would split up from that group just like that.)
Maybe she went to the toi—
(Awawawawa! If you proceed that thought any further, I'll wake you up in the middle of the night, okay!)
Scary, seriously. Well, it's a habit of mine to fantasize, so I already imagined that sight.
(…Geez.)
…Oh?
(What's wrong? Were you imagining something weird after all…?)
No no no. Look over there, isn't that Himeno Miina? We stood in the center of the pathway connecting the gym hall and school building, and around 30m away from there, I spotted a bright light coming from the courtyard. It had to be Himeno Miina.
(I'm not some light, and neither do I give off some divine aura like you make it sound…)
Having felt Himeno Miina's presence nearby, I rushed off towards the courtyard.
(Wah, it really is me…S-Scary!)
It's not scary at all. It's one of my standard features. But, I wonder what she's doing here? Club is about to start, and yet she's still wearing her normal school uniform. As for the gym clothes…I've seen those already today, so I'm fine.

(Enough with the gym clothes. Though, I am curious what she's up to.)
I stood a bit further away, observing her from a distance. She carried some heavy-looking cardboard box, so she probably was transporting it to an outhouse. I ignored the whole heroine conquest thing for a moment, and just decided to help Himeno Miina first.
(Ohh? Itsuki-kun, you're so proactive today.)
"? Saotome-kun!?" Himeno Miina seemed bewildered at my sudden appearance.
"Sorry…for the sudden interruption. It looked heavy, so…I'll carry it for you."
As always, my words sounded lame and creepy. But, now isn't the time for self-deprecation, I need to help her.
"Eh, ah, t-thanks…But, it's heavy, you know?"
"I-I'm fine!"
Still a bit confused, Himeno Miina put the cardboard box on the ground. Her odd behaviour had me curious, but the same goes for the contents of the box. I wonder what's in there.
(It's weird seeing me react in a way that I don't understand, really.)
Miena tilted her head, and closely inspected her main body. Since Miena had returned to her normal uniform appearance, they looked like siblings standing next to each other…Well, they are the same person after all.
"It does look heavy, but…is it something that could break if it falls to the ground?"
(You don't need to be so formal, it's just me.)
Yeah, but she's Himeno Miina, not Miena, okay.
(Hmpf.)
Miena directed a pout of protest at me. I guess even if they are the same person, I can't help but tense up when it comes to the main heroine. If I make the wrong choice here, it'll completely ruin the atmosphere. That's the main difference to you, Miena.
(She's just any other gal game otaku, you know!)
Ah, so you finally admitted it? Not to mention without your main body being aware of it. Also, why are you trying to head chop your own body, stop that.
"It might be. It has two gas cookers inside."
"Gas cookers?"
"My class will be doing a maid cafe for the culture festival. I was chosen as the supervisor for that, so I'm already in the middle of my preparations."
So even Himeno Miina got forced into being the supervisor, huh.
(That's what I'd expect from myself! My classmates have great trust in my abilities, ha ha ha!)
You say that yourself!? I bet it was just pushed onto her.
(It pains me to say it, but it sure sounds that way…Haa, that's very much like me again.)
Not just like you, she is the person in question, and the real one. Unlike you, Miena.

(Hmpf!)
“That sounds hard.”
Considering Miena’s words just now, I spoke up again.
“It is hard for sure, but there’s a lot to gain as well. It really makes me feel like I’m participating in the culture festival if I help prepare like this, and I’m looking forward to seeing all the happy faces of the visitors we get.”
Hey now, isn’t this the exact opposite of what you were saying? She sounds like an absolute honor student.
(W-Weird…why am I so motivated…)
Just as Miena had pointed out, Himeno Miina seemed dedicated to the preparations. That’s Himeno Miina for you, she’s completely different from a certain gal game otaku.
(Hm? Hmpf! Why are you treating me so much different from my real body!?)
Miena pointed at her real body, full of hostility. If Miena was real, her index finger would have touched Himeno Miina’s cheek by now. I mean, just look at her, she’s way too cute.
(What do you mean by that! Hmpf, just let me carry the heavy stuff already!)
As I was busy appreciating Himeno Miina’s existence, Miena complained even further, hehe.
“Ahh, really…So cute…”
“Eh…cute?”
(Hey! You said that out loud!)
Not good! Since I was thinking about Miena, I relaxed too much and let that slip!
“……” Himeno Miina looked at me in a daze.
“Ah, I’m…sorry! It’s nothing. Anyway, I’ll carry this for you! Where does this go?!”
I need to focus on Himeno Miina now, not Miena!
(Grrrr…that face of hers is just annoying me now…!)
“I was planning on carrying this to the empty classroom on the third floor of the east building, but are you sure? This is pretty heavy.”
She probably doesn’t know that I’m part of the go-home club. However, she surely judged that my body would have trouble carrying whatever is in there. Ahh, I wish I had worked out a bit more.
(Rather than Mr. I’m going home today, my real body is a trained badminton player, so just leave it to me.)
Like hell I could do that! Is there any protagonist who’d ignore his main heroine who’s in trouble like this!?
(Ah……S-So cool…)
“Alright! One, two, up we go!”
I lowered my waist, and put all the strength I had into my legs. Oh, it’s not that heavy. Maybe 15kg at best? It’s no biggie at all.
“Isn’t it heavy!? I can carry it on my own, so don’t push yourself, okay?”
“No problem, I’m confident when it comes to physical labour…Ah, whoops.”

(You're not fine at all! Your heart is racing again! Just let me carry it!)
My heart is racing because of another reason, okay. I'm talking with Himeno Miina, this intimately…
(Even though I'm always much closer to you!?)
While I carried the cardboard box with both my hands, we entered the school building, and went up the stairs. The weight itself isn't a problem at all, but going up to the third floor is pretty tough. Himeno Miina was right behind me, paying attention that I won't lose my balance and fall. She really is as kind as an angel.
"Don't force yourself, okay? About yesterday, I actually…"
My angel was saying something, but I was too focused on properly carrying this cardboard box. I can't afford to fail here, otherwise I might really just stop coming to school, so I put all my attention on the carrying.
(I'm not an angel or anything…Rejecting Itsuki-kun's invitation, despite him working so earnestly…I won't forgive that, you demon heroine…**Mumble mumble**.)
Not only from behind me, now I even heard faint muttering from a certain ghost next to me. Even though it was the same voice, the tone sounded like it came from a totally different person. I somehow managed to carry the box up to the third floor, and walked away like a dignified protagonist—I lied as naturally as I breathed, because I was running like a cat terrified of thunder because my heart wouldn't take it anymore. However, I feel like I've forgotten something…
(The whole exchanging contact information bit, yeah.)
……Ah.
Night arrived, and as always, I was forced to reflect on my actions today. Regarding my conquest attempt today, it was an utter failure. However, I gathered some crucial information, so I'll count it as a success in that regard.
(What information?)
That I'll get to see Himeno Miina wearing a maid uniform during the culture festival! Hell yeah! Heh heh heh.
(Wah, who cares about information like that…Also, since I'll be the supervisor, I won't be wearing a maid uniform, you know?)
Eh…you won't…?
(Eh…why are you so depressed about that…I wouldn't really know about that, not like it even matters that much…)
It feels like I fell from heaven down to the deepest layer of hell.
(A-Alright, I get it! Once I'm back together with my main body, I'll let you, you know…Although it's really embarrassing…)
Seriously!? Hell yeah! I need to hurry and get Himeno Miina's contact information!
(About that, I feel like the chances of that have gone up a lot thanks to today's event.)
Seriously?

(However, I feel like you also raised the affection of another heroine in the mix. Even though the most important act right now is to focus on a single heroine rather than several…)
There's other heroines in my gal game? First time I heard of that.
(How dense of a protagonist can you be? You need to be a bit more sensitive towards the other heroines' feelings. This isn't some light novel, you know?)
So I need to become more of a gal game fanatic for it to really click?
(You're making fun of me again, right. Tomorrow, we'll exchange contact information with my real body for sure, okay?)
Yup! While fantasizing about Himeno Miina's maid uniform, I headed to bed. Miena usually falls asleep quite fast, it's something that I've grown accustomed to over these past two weeks. Normally, I would use her faint breathing as BGM to make me fall asleep, but today I heard nothing of that. Since she wasn't right next to me, but rather floating above me, I can't confirm anything either.
—Miena!?
I caught on to this irregularity, and called out to her in a way that only she could hear. However, no response came. What's going on? Where is she? I tried to raise my body amidst the darkness, but I failed to move my upper body. And it wasn't just that, my entire being was wrapped in an odd comfortable feeling and sense of tranquility, it's like my brain was denying to give out orders to my body.
This peaceful sensation…is this a dream? Maybe I felt so happy and delighted at simply being able to talk with Himeno Miina that I fell asleep in an instant? Right as I wanted to turn my body, an unfamiliar object popped up in my view. It was right next to my head, consisting of white fabric with frills attached. At first, I thought I was just looking at my curtains, but there shouldn't be anything close to me.
I moved my gaze along the laces, finding a silky sparkling fabric reminding me of polyester. The color of this fabric seemed black to me, but was that simply because of my surroundings being this dark? Right as I decided to simply give in to this feeling, this unknown object suddenly started moving ever so gently.
(Oh, did I wake you up?)
An angelic voice tickled my ears. Of course, it wasn't an angel at all. It was Miena's clear voice that I had heard so many times recently. What, it's just you, Miena? When you're this close to me, it really feels like you're right next to me.
Hm…? Right next to me!? Why are you this close!? Eh, what even is going on…!? I moved my eyes, trying to understand this situation I found myself in.
(H-Hey, don't stare at me like this…It's embarrassing…!)
I immediately understood just why she felt embarrassed. The fabric that had been in my sight this entire time actually belonged to a maid uniform she was wearing. Right now, she wore the type of gothic maid uniform that I

was imagining right before heading to bed. Because of the darkness surrounding me, I couldn't say for certain, but I think that her clothes were drenched in a black tone. After all, that's what I wished for. However, there is one thing that doesn't make much sense. Why…why are you giving me a lap pillow!?
(Ehehehe, when talking about maids, you can't forget a lap pillow with ear cleaning, right~)
What kind of knowledge is that supposed to be!? From gal games!? If so, then I love gal games! Accurately speaking, since I can't touch Miena like this, it's just a fake lap pillow, but because this happened in the darkness, my heart started racing faster.
(Uuuu…is this really Itsuki-kun's heartbeat…or is it mine…?)
So this is the destructive power of gal games…!?
(Ohh? Have you finally understood the charm of gal games, Itsuki-kun? That's great! In gal games, the heroines would cosplay like this, and…Oh yeah, in the gal game I played before…)
—Ahh, I'm so happy. I can experience something like a dream in reality. Until now, I would have never imagined that I would get to spend such a blissful time like this. If only this time could continue forever…As my head was slowly dozing off, a certain thought popped up in my head. Do I actually like Himeno Miina? Whenever I interact with her at school, amidst my nervosity, are there really any romantic feelings filling my chest?
The answer—is no. I've realized it now. Rather than talking with Himeno Miina at school, I feel much more bliss when I interact with this maid girl that's giving me a lap pillow right now. Rather than the facade that Himeno Miina is acting out, I much more like Miena who reveals her honest feelings.
During the first term, just like every other student, I was looking at Himeno Miina like an idol. However, she's no idol at all, but just another high school student who has her own share of problems. You could find a girl like her everywhere—is what I would say, but surely it'll be hard to meet a girl who is this much into gal games.
It's true that Himeno Miina is my type, and in the dead center of my strikezone. However, more than any of that, I've started to awaken to a loving heart which is directed at Miena, who always supports me.
Although I feel happy that she's making me happy by wearing what I fantasize about, more than anything—I long to touch her. And yet, even though she's this close to me, I can't feel her, which leaves me empty inside. It really is a shame that my main heroine isn't even available as a target to conquer. Can I just throw a complaint at the game publisher?
…If Miena goes back to her main body, I wonder what will happen. Will all her memories we spent together vanish, with us going back to how we were in our first term? At school, we're just heroine and mob. I may know of her real personality, but she does not know of me. Just thinking about this makes it feel like my heart is being torn apart.

Of course, I’m worried about Himeno Miina herself, but the sense of danger and fear of losing Miena entirely is much stronger. At the same time as I wish for things to stay like this forever, I also know that we need to return her as quickly as possible. Of course, there’s no way I can tell Miena about these twisted feelings of mine.
(—And then, the way you had to raise a flag with that heroine was so unique! You had to move onto another heroine’s route, and change it during that. It was a lot of work for me to…Itsuki-kun, are you even listening!?)
After all, I can’t suddenly change my route mid-playthrough.

Chapter 4: Spring Forth, Event!

This was the following afternoon after the day I had helped Himeno Miina, with classes having already concluded for the day. As I was the supervisor for the attraction my class would be offering during the culture festival, I immediately learned from Himeno Miina, and started preparing. Of course, while still continuing the Himeno Miina conquest strategy.
(One more month until the culture festival, huh. Will I experience it this way, I wonder?)
Was that maid uniform lap pillow event yesterday just a dream of mine? Miena did not mention anything about it for the entire day. I'll just label it as a dream of mine, and move on. So that Miena can enjoy the culture festival the way she wants to, I need to quickly get in contact with Himeno Miina. For now, I'll focus on that.
Though, looking at Himeno Miina's reaction yesterday, I feel like that would prove a bit difficult. After all, I see no progress if we're actually closer or not. Maybe she's annoyed by me, I wouldn't know.
(I can guarantee that's not the case.)
Even if you say that, I really can't put much faith into that, you know~
(Don't be like that. Today, I'll help you completely win her over today with my advice.)
Are you sure about that…I feel like asking someone else would have been better in the long run…
(I know myself the best. That includes how I like to be treated, as well as my likes and dislikes.)
Hmm…Well, whatever. Time to procure the cardboard boxes.
(Ah, you don't have any faith in me at all, right?)
While exchanging a few words with Miena, I walked around the school to look for cardboard boxes that I could use in the haunted house. Although we still have a full month until then, it's much more beneficial for me to start early. It'd be troublesome if another class managed to secure them before us, and I want to snatch everything that I can which they offer here at school.
Since I was without success in my search for cardboard boxes, I widened up my search area, and moved to the middle school division. It's been about half a year since I last came here. Walking along the same plot I had been so used to, I felt a healthy amount of nostalgia.
(It feels much more fresh to me.)

Yeah, you're not an insider here after all. I'd love to show you around, but there's nothing worth mentioning here.
(You're pulling the 'We're so normal' appeal, right.)
Right as I was enjoying a bit of back and forth banter with Miena…
"Ah, it's Itsuki-nii. What are you doing here?"
"Oh, Himari. Great timing, can you help me look for some cardboard boxes?"
Right upon entering the plot of the middle school division, I ran into my junior Himari.
(It's Himari-chan~ She's like a real little sister, so cute~)
Not good, the second words like little sister and childhood friend pop up, this gal game brain in my head is automatically guiding my thoughts. Need to ignore her for now.
"Cardboard boxes? What are you going to use them for? Infiltrate some secret base?"
"Hell no, I'm using them for the culture festival."
"I see, it's the time for the high school division's culture festival, huh. I want to hurry up and become a high school student myself."
"It'll happen soon enough, so enjoy your days as a middle school student some more."
"After you and Rion-nee moved up to high school, it feels like I'm the only one being left out…"
"You're still a child after all, Himari. So, where could I find some cardboard boxes?"
Hearing me use the word child, Himari's cheeks popped out, as she pouted at me.
"Hmpf. There should be some behind the school at the storage shed. Since you need the help of a child like me, you're even more of a child right, Itsuki-nii? Ehehe."
I ignored that comment and walked after Himari, onwards to the storage shed.
(I want to have a little sister like her myself~)
On the way there, Miena kept going on about how much she loves Himari.
Also, since you're making it sound that way, she's not my little sister, okay.
(But she's really clingy when it comes to you, Itsuki-kun.)
We were in the same literary club back in middle school. Not to mention just the two of us, so that's why.
(I see~ But, is that the only reason? She gives off a scent similar to Rion-chan.)
Maybe they're using the same shampoo?
(That's not what I was talking about! Itsuki-kun…are you aiming for the harem route?)
Huh? I'm a beginner at gal games, I have no idea what you're even on about.
(I wanna know why Himari-chan is so attached to you. Go ask her.)

Huh? Why me? Is it that important?
(Yup. It's very crucial to our future heroine conquest strategy, and absolutely essential information.)
S-Seriously…Gal games are crazy, and absolutely beyond me.
"By the way, Himari?"
"Nya?"
"I'm thankful that you help me out like this, but why are you even going that far?"
"Hm? Where did that come from?"
"You know, you're popular in class, right. Aren't you embarrassed about being seen together with some loner like me?"
Since we always spend time together after class back in middle school, I wasn't too bothered with how we seemed to the outside. It was totally normal for us to be together. It was like we were a pair of siblings. I can't blame an outsider like Miena to be curious about it now. If anything, after she pointed it out, now I'm interested in it myself.
"I'm not embarrassed at all." Himari stopped in her tracks, and gave me a blunt answer.
On top of that, her expression was different from the usual innocent Himari, as I felt a strong pressure from deep inside her big eyes. This is the first time I saw Himari like this.
"Because you're an only-child, huh. Well, I do feel like an older brother when it comes to—"
"That's not it." Himari wouldn't even let me finish my words, immediately denying them.
"Wha…what's that serious face for?"
"Itsuki-nii, do you not remember your first kiss with me…?"
(First kiiiiiiiiiiiiss!?)
Hey hey hey, what is this girl saying!? Also, don't scream like that, Miena. You're giving me a headache.
"Um…ehm…I don't have any memory of that happening, though…"
If that really happened, then even I would remember. What kind of romcom is this, just explode already, me.
"I knew it. Judging from your attitude so far, I figured that might have been the case."
"?"
"When I just moved up to middle school, you stopped me from falling down the stairs, right?"
"I remember! I sure do! As a result of that incident, you joined the literary club I was in, right?"
Yeah, I still remember that. That's how we got to know each other. So nostalgic, really.
(Itsuki-kun, you only save girls who fall down the stairs… So I wasn't the first one…)
Hm? Why are you so sad about that, Miena.

“Back then, our lips overlapped, and…”
“They sure as hell didn’t!”
(Itsuki-kun…so you already had your first kiss…)
I didn’t! Also, do you sound like you’re close to breaking out in tears!
(I’m the only one who has no experience kissing…**Sniff**.)
Ehhh!? You don’t? So that means…Himeno Miina doesn’t either!? At the very least, no stories like that are going around, and I didn’t hear anything from Shouma either.
(…Of course I don’t! Dummy!)
I got some secret information! Heck yeah! Great job, Himari! …Wait no, that’s not important right now. I need to resolve this misunderstanding quickly.
(Misunderstanding…is it?)
And about this misunderstanding as well!
“Himari, you seem to have the wrong idea about something. Back then, I caught you in my arms, so our lips were nowhere close to touching.”
“Ehhh, really? Hmmm? Weird~?”
Ah, she was trying to tease me, huh.
(Hoh, so that’s what that was. Man, Himari-chan really got me with that one~)
“Geez. Let’s go to the storage shed already.”
“It’s because you suddenly said something weird like that. Of course, I like Itsuki-nii.”
“Yeah yeah, I got it. Thanks a bunch.”
(It seems like we avoided a different route.)
“Ehehehe.” Himari showed a smile like the warm sun.

I listened to the cicadas chirping, while enjoying this smile, and we started walking again. The rapid change of seasons sure becomes apparent now. Not a second ago, I wasn't feeling any nostalgia, but it probably is because of my conversation with Himari. If I just leave everything to the passage of time, I won't be able to conquer my heroine. And then, Miena will stay the way she is right now, with neither of us knowing if this will have any repercussions.
I need to become the active one, and approach Himeno Miina. After this whole cardboard carrying is over, I'll think about how to win over Himeno Miina without asking Miena for help. This was the determination filling my chest—I will save Miena.
We passed through the school building with a dense atmosphere, and reached the storage shed. Just as HImari stated, there were several stacked cardboard boxes.
"Can I just take them with me?"
"Sure. There's a paper here, saying that you can take as many as you want. They're boxes that were used to deliver food and stuff for the school store."
She's right, they're up for use. I immediately started working to carry them back to the empty classroom in the high school division.
(Geez, what is my real body doing at this time…Even though Itsuki-kun offered to help, she's not there to repay the favor at all…**Mumble mumble**.)
Since I don't give off any dazzling light like she does, she probably has trouble finding me.
(I don't either, okay!)
"Hello, Saotome-kun."
Hm?
"?"
Somebody suddenly called out to me from behind my back, so both Himari and I turned around at the same time.
"H-Himeno-san!?"
(M-Me!?)
"Why is Himeno-senpai here…?"
Standing there was none other than Himeno Miina, hiding from the sun in the shadows of the school building. And yet, it felt like I saw a faint circle of light shining around her.
(Stop with the weird depictions already. I-It's embarrassing…)
"So this is where you were."
"You… were looking for me?"
Why? How? Just when I decided to be more manly and search for her…
"Saotome-kun, thanks a lot for yesterday. Because of your help, the preparations went smoothly."
"Y-You're welcome."
She only came here to say that?

(What am I thinking…!?)
Hey now, you should know that yourself the best. You are her after all.
(…Ah! Right! She came here to help you! It's probably to thank you for yesterday. That's what I would do!)
"So, do you have a bit of time right now? There's something I'd like to talk about just between the two of us."
"Just the two of us?"
"Yup. I don't want to steal you from Himari-chan, but it'll be really quick."
"I…understand. Himari, I'll be right back."
"Okay~ But, Itsuki-nii, no cheating okay? I'll tell Rion-nee otherwise."
"Why would you bring up Rion now…Well, anyway, thanks a lot for today, you can head back now."
"Mmm, carrying these cardboard boxes must be tough, right? I'll just wait here."
Himari remained where we had stood, whereas Himeno Miina and I moved to a different location.
(Mmmm??? What's with this sudden event? Makes no sense. It seems like this heroine is bugged or something.)
As we moved to the back of the school building, I could only hear the cicadas chirping and the faint fall breeze. And, can't forget about Himeno Miina's faint toofsteps. Only our footsteps reverberated.
"This should be fine. Sorry to suddenly call you over like this."
"No no!"
(Itsuki-kun, you don't need to be so tense about this. Today, she has some business with you, so just be open and hear her out. But, don't let her play you!)
Miena-san, why are you so hostile towards yourself…
"Fufu, you don't need to be so nervous, you know?"
(She's so calm, almost like she's looking down at you…It's annoying me… Was I always this kind of character?)
Eh, she's super cute though. She's being considerate, showing that in her expression, right.
(You're too easy of a protagonist.)
"I might be a bit nervous."
(She's using formal language with you, so just go along.)
You're asking too much of me again.
(You don't need to be all polite towards me, okay?)
"You don't have to speak so politely towards me. I'm also using frank language."
"I under…I got it."
Weird, she's oddly friendly with me today. It's almost like I'm talking with Miena herself.
(She's gotten even more weird compared to last time. This amount of progress just seems dangerous at this point. This might be bad.)

Because I was too slow!? Maybe because I was too nervous, and gross, which made her realize that I don't deserve any polite language? I don't really get Himeno Miina's true intentions, but with nobody around, it's at least much easier to ask for a contact information exchange.
(Wait, it might be better for us to rethink our strategy. Something about me is off today.)
No, I'll be going on the offensive today. Even if she rejects me, I'll keep going until she accepts.
(Itsuki-kun…)
"So, Himeno-san…"
"I'm sorry to suddenly call you out like this. Let me apologize for what happened before.
"…What happened before?"
"Yep. You wanted to exchange contact information with me, right? I just went and rejected you for that… and I'm really sorry."
She showed an even deeper bow compared to the time she was talking about.
(This woman…I want to hit her…)
Miena formed a fist, boiling with anger. Stop that, I don't like violent heroines. Also, don't hit yourself, okay.
"I'm totally fine! If anything, I should have expected that reaction, suddenly asking Himeno-san for your number."
(Itsuki-kun…I really want to hit you now…)
Stop that, I don't like violent heroines. Also, don't hit the protagonist, okay.
"Fufu, that's very much like you, Saotome-kun." The girl raised her head, and showed a relieved smile.
Much like me? Maybe she finally found out how gross I really am? Well, that incident during that past lunch break turned into a rumour at school after all. It still is a shock…
"You don't need to worry about that, Himeno-san. If anything, I was planning on asking you one more time for your contact information."
Simply using casual language was all it took from me.
"I'm glad to hear that. I was actually hoping to ask you for that myself. I know that I don't have much right to do so, after rejecting you once, but…If you still want to exchange numbers, then I'd be happy."
"Eh, s-seriously!? Are you sure? I'm really happy, yes. Please take care of me."
(Why are you backed into a corner now!? This woman is suddenly acting all arrogant…That mask of hers is crazy…W-What is she planning…?)
As the exact opposite of Miena's shaking voice, I finished exchanging my contact information with Himeno Miina, using a shaking voice myself. My smartphone finally contains the number of my admired heroine! Not to mention it's the number of this school's idol! Did you see that!?)

(Don’t give me that! Even if you show me such a shit-eating grin, I’m not really that happy…M-Maybe I am a bit frustrated, but there’s also this sense of accomplishment…Ahh, this is complicated…Hmpf!)
“…Thanks.”
“…Thanks.”
Since we both spoke at the same time, Himeno Miina and I exchanged glances, and laughed.
(What are you laughing about?)
Miena broke between the two of us, glaring at us both. However, I wasn’t given much time to direct my attention at Miena’s bad mood, all because of the next bombshell Himeno Miina dropped with no warning.
“O-Oh yeah, to celebrate this success, how about we go watch a movie together the day after tomorrow, on Sunday?”
Huh?
(Huh?)
This time, Miena and I let out a dumbfounded voice in perfect synchrony. It makes sense that I wouldn’t understand this sudden development. After all, not the person herself did.
“U-Um? Hm? Was I mishearing things? Y-You want to watch a movie? With me?”
My head was filled with question marks all over. Not to mention that even Himeno Miina herself was frozen stiff…Maybe she really bugged out? Apparently this gal game is pretty buggy. Are they going to release a patch soon? Maybe she regrets abruptly inviting me to the movies?
(Even though she brought it up, I can’t believe her! Enough, just reject her!)
Ehhhh, I can’t do that! Also, I simply don’t want that. This invitation might never ever come in my entire life. Isn’t this the perfect chance for me to get closer and touch Himeno Miina? Also again, why are you so against yourself all of a sudden?
(Itsuki-kun, calm your horses. You don’t need to necessarily be close with her, as long as you touch her.)
What kind of business-like heroine conquest is this supposed to be?
“Himeno-san?”
Unable to bear with the silence, I spoke up. Please, don’t leave me hanging like this.
“Hm? Ah, s-sorry, maybe you don’t want to?”
“No no, of course I want to! I might be inexperienced, but please treat me… well!”
(Why are you acting like a newlywed couple…)
“Ehehe, thanks. Then, I’ll tell you the place and time later.”
“Y-Yeah.”
After that, Himeno Miina also helped us carry the cardboard boxes, and I finished this afternoon with the greatest high in my entire life. For the first time ever, it felt like some colors appeared in my dull days.

This feeling of course didn’t stop even while I was on my way home. Half of September had already passed, and it felt like the days were ending much faster. Normally, I would be left with an odd sense of loneliness when the sun started to set, but nothing of that was found today. Instead, it felt like the spring sun was still shining on me and my encounter today. A feeling of happiness and accomplishment filled me.
I did it! This is a date event with Himeno Miina! Arriving at the entrance of my home, all these feelings exploded, and I formed a fist.
(A date event, huh…Her affection for you rose far too much after we got into the route…Aren’t we hitting the maximum value? This is too easy…even for me.)
What? Are you jealous? Well, I can’t blame you, it’s Himeno Miina after all~ Hehehe…fufufu…fuhehehehe…
(I’m not going to retort on that again, alright.)
“Itsuki, what are you grinning for?”
Right as I was about to open the door to my home, a girlish voice called out to me from the plot next to mine.
“R-Rion, since when were you there!?”
“Ever since you came back with an eerie grin on your face.”
“I see…Hehe.”
“Seriously, what’s gotten into you? Did something good happen? Haven’t seen you this happy in a while.” Rion walked over to my home with a curious expression.
“Well, yeah. Rather than in a while, I don’t think I was ever this happy in my entire life.”
(If you feel this happy about it, I’m sure that the heroine herself would be delighted to know that.)
“Don’t tell me, did something happen with Hime!?”
“Eh!? W-Why do you think so?”
“I don’t know? My woman’s intuition.”
(Sharp! A maiden in love sure is on a different level.)
And more useful than a certain someone.
(You didn’t need to add that!)
“W-Well, there might have been something, there might not have…there definitely is something.”
“Seriously!? You made progress with Hime? I don’t buy that! It’s Hime we’re talking about, remember!?”
Not having fully heard out my response, Rion grew flustered.
(Maybe everyone really is keeping a certain distance from me…Well, makes sense since I don’t try to close the distance between others…)
Seems like Rion stepped on a landmine. However, the person in question didn’t receive any damage, and all these feelings instead rushed over to the benevolent mob, so I’d wish for her to stop that. I guess I need to throw in a follow-up of sorts.

“Himen-san is just like any other high school girl. Not much different from you at all.”
“Yeah, that might be true, but…Ah, does that mean I have a chance…”
(Itsuki-kun…that choice just now was exceptionally good, but you’re setting foot onto the harem route there.)
Huh? I was just trying to help Himeno Miina a bit. Isn’t this gal game a bit too hard for a newcomer like me, I can’t follow at all…
“Himeno-san has all sorts of hobbies herself, but she just can’t tell others.”
(Youuuu dummy! That choice will drastically drop your main heroine’s affection for you!)
“I know that, and it’s not like I want to invade her privacy or anything. It’s just, Hime would never just interact with some random boy, so I was surprised. Not to mention Hime and Itsuki…you know.”
It seems like Rion is more surprised that Himeno Miina gave any boy the time of day, rather than being specifically shocked that this boy is me. What a weird feeling.
“What, you make it sound like you have lots of experience with guys.”
“H-Huh!? I-I sure do! Lots, actually! You just don’t know!?”
“Hmm, I see.”
(Rion-chan…If I was the player here, I’d go for her straight away. She’s a character directly in my strikezone. She is my childhood friend after all.)
I ain’t listening. Also, she’s not a character nor your childhood friend.
“Since I have an abundance of experience, I’ll give you some advice, Itsuki.”
“Don’t force yourself, amateur.”
She’s living right next to me, so I’m not losing against an amateur like her. At least when it comes to gal games.
“I-I’m not an amateur! …Anyway, girls are weak against a direct approach and when you honestly convey your feelings. Hearing your honest feelings you normally wouldn’t say out loud, it makes our hearts skip.”
“Hmmm…”
(What is this…Rion-chan is much more well versed in conquering methods than me…Is she actually a gal game otaku!?)
Keep your hopes and dreams only in your head, will you.
(I don’t want to hear that from a guy who keeps fantasizing all day…)
“Being there for her when she needs someone to talk to gets a lot of points as well. Helping her out in a time of need…it’s all over…”
Yeah, I want to become a man who can help a heroine in need.
“Speaking from personal experience, Rion?”
“N-No! Not at all! That just…helps in making a girl who already likes you even more head over heels for you!”
“Why are you blowing a fuse now? Also, there aren’t any girls who like me anyway.”
“T-There might be? You just don’t realize…not to mention very close by…”
“Huh? Like hell. I’m a plain and lonely mob at school, right.”
“But, your relationship with Hime progressed, right?”

“He he he…you’re right~”
“Hmpf, good for you. Make sure she doesn’t suddenly come to hate you, okay! I-I have to prepare dinner now, so I’m going. Bye.”
“Yup.”
Ten times faster than she previously approached me, Rion now stormed back into her own home.
(What the hell is this…You’re breaking so many flags. In any normal gal game, you’d be the worst kind of protagonist.)
The following Saturday, I bought some new clothes at a nearby fashion shop with the assistance of Miena. After getting home, I checked over them again. Can’t fail at this event no matter what. Still, are these clothes really good enough?
(It’s totally fine, there’s no way I wouldn’t like the clothes I pick out for you.)
Looking at your hobbies and taste, I don’t think I can put much faith into that. Also, gotta set the alarm so that I don’t oversleep…Hey, Miena, you have to make sure that you wake me up before 8am, you hear me!? If I oversleep tomorrow, I’ll…Ugh!
Himeno Miina told me that we’d meet up at 10am, at the train station in the center of town. Thinking about my preparations in the morning and time to get there, I definitely need to get up before 8am.
(You’re way too nervous about every small thing, geez.)
I need to be prepared for everything. I definitely can’t fail at this chance.
(Damn me…Raising such an event like this…I’m exhausted just tagging along with Itsuki-kun, and all his fantasies…)
In preparation for the day tomorrow, I questioned Miena about all sorts of stuff. My preparations are complete, so I only have to wait for tomorrow to come…Ahh, I’m so nervous I can’t sleep!
(Geez…all because my real body did something like that…)
That night, I couldn’t fall asleep at all. My heart was beating faster than usual, and even Miena was up late. And then, the next morning arrived.
(Itsuki-kuuun, it’s morning. Wake up~)
Mmm…What time is it? **Yaaaawn**.
(…9am, I guess.)
9am!? Are you kidding me!? You serious!?
(Y-Yeah…Sorry, I overslept myself…Tehe~)
Miena stuck out her tongue, and gently tapped her fist against her head.
Don’t you ‘Tehe~’ me! It’s not cute at all! Well, a bit because you look like Himeno Miina! I need to hurry up! I can’t be late on my very first date in my life…!

(Like I said! You don’t need to be so desperate, calm down.)
Like hell I can calm down. You’re just underestimating this because it’s your main body. And because of that, we failed several times. To me, Himeno Miina is Himeno Miina. To her, I’m just me.

(Once I’m back, she’ll see why you ended up late, so it’s fine.)
Even so…I can’t afford to be late today. I don’t want her to think of me as lousy, and uncaring. She went out of her way to invite me after all. It’s the Himeno Miina **right now** nonetheless.
(Hmpf.)
H-Huh? Don’t tell me…are you actually jealous? No, that’s impossible, you can’t be jealous towards yourself.
(S-Shut up! You don’t have to say it over and over again! I’m not jealous or anything, you dummy!)
You don’t need to get so angry at me with a beet red face like that. I rushed to put on the clothes Miena selected for me, and dashed to the train station. Shortly after, my new clothes already gave off a faint smell of sweat.
Normally I would have loved to get a bit of rest in the express train, but as I mentioned before, no such train stops at this train station. See how hard us commoners have it compared to the royalty?
(Why are you acting like that? It’s not like I always take express trains.)
Whatever, can’t this train be a bit faster!?
(Don’t be ridiculous. Maybe it’s because of your heartbeat, but now I’m starting to feel nervous myself. Why do I have to be nervous when meeting up with myself? Just make her wait a bit.)
Please, take this a bit more seriously, will you. Isn’t today the most important event of the heroine conquest you always talk about!?
(Maybe, but we’re already on the route, and there’s no CG to get, so I’m not that motivated. And even if we got CG, it’d just be me again, so who needs that.)
What does CG even mean!? Taking a selfie!? I want that!
(Did I get you even more motivated now? Well, if you’re that into it, we might as well move on to the ending today.)
Ending?
(So that I’ll go back to my main body—In other words, you’ll have to touch my real body today, Itsuki-kun.)
It seems like Miena is quite confident in the success of our heroine conquest strategy. She sure is confident despite there not having happened anything until yesterday.
(I can tell since it’s me we’re talking about. We are the same. Like parameters having changed in probability, I can see the progress we made.)
Again, it’s hard for me to put faith in that. Maybe I should become the main actor today.
(Didn’t you hate acting yourself? Hehe.)
Just by having Miena next to me, I can feel myself filled with courage. I’ll just pray that Himeno Miina is the same way she was the other day. With this Miena-ness, I should be able to talk to her just fine.
(What the hell is Miena-ness!? I am the real one, okay? G-Geez…)
While Miena and I were talking about the whole heroine conquest, I reached the train station we had planned to meet up. It was quite a stylish

train station. Upon getting off the train, I spotted a cafe in an open place. Although it was Sunday, a lot of people were around. In the midst of these, couples and young women stood out the most. I feel bad for the men walking around with suits even on Sunday.
(Shiraishi-san and friends often come here to play. It's a popular normie spot, you know. But, I don't like coming to these kinds of stylish places.)
Really? But, that's good to know. I'm glad you helped me pick out some clothes for me, I wouldn't want to be here wearing just a jersey.
(Yeah, a jersey is too much…But, there's a chance she wouldn't mind it.)
Are you serious? Also, I need to search for Himeno Miina first! Also, it's already 10 past 10am now. I'm already ten minutes late. I can't afford to make her wait any longer.
(I appreciate your mentality of not wanting to make your date wait, but can you at least make it so your heart stops racing painfully fast like it is right now?)
Despite saying this, Miena-san was awfully calm. Not for me though, I was panicking for good. I stepped out of the ticket gate, and rushed to the small plaza we decided to meet up at. This is the place, right? When I looked around, I immediately spotted Himeno Miina. She sure stands out, alright. Even though there's a lot of stylish people around, she's a beauty standing above others. Seriously, why would she watch a movie with someone like me? I'm feeling even more anxious now.
(It's fine, I'm telling you. I'm sure that, while she was waiting for you, she thought about how to conquer the next character in the gal game she bought not too long ago.)
Hard to believe, but I can see that happening with you…
"S-Sorry! I'm really sorry for being late!"
I arrived in front of the girl, and made sure to apologize first. Even though I prepared everything so that this wouldn't happen, I still disappointed her… I'm so lame, I want to die.
"No, it's fine. You don't need to panic like that, I just came here myself."
She just smiled to reassure me. Ahh, how kind.
(See, that's what I told you. I'm not the type of person who lives by 'Time is money', so just be honest and it's all good.)
Compared to that, Miena-san calmly argued about the strategy we had. Maybe Himeno Miina was thinking something similar today?
(Don't think she has the leisure to do that. Anyway, I don't want to lose against myself today, so we'll end this in one fell swoop.)
Now you're motivated, huh.
"T-Thank you. By the way! Your clothes are really cute today!"
Alright, I did it! I've been practicing this phrase countless times yesterday with Miena after all. She wore a grey-based flared skirt with pink checks, and a black blouse above that. On the armholes down her shoulder was a small almost transparent black color that almost allowed me to look inside.

This only made her look more stylish. On top of that, she wore my favorite black high knee socks! What a blessing for the eyes!
Getting to see Himeno Miina in her casual clothes is super rare. So this is one of those CGs? What a treasure.
“C-Cute!? …T-Thanks.”
(What are you blushing like that, me? No matter how you look at it, Itsuki-kun was just being polite, nothing more.)
Why are you so angry now? It was a success, so what’s it matter?
(…She’s too easy. Also, these clothes, did I have them before?)
You forgot what clothes you have? Himeno Miina might actually not be too invested in her own fashion…Well, I could sort of guess that with Miena.
Comparing the stylish Himeno Miina, and Miena in her natural appearance, it created a fresh feeling with the difference between the two. I’m sure that normally, she’d be wearing much more casual clothes…The reason Miena isn’t wearing her usual hair accessory probably is another proof that she’s showing her true self right now.
“Your clothes look great on you as well, Saotome-kun. Do you like this sort of stuff?”
Ohhh! Himeno Miina praised me! By the way, Miena chose a knitted warm-colored top for me, with a black tailor jacket above that. Below, I wore denim checked cargo pants. Everything’s black about me.
“Y-Yeah! I like this kind of black-ish fashion a lot.”
“…Huh, I-I see. That’s pretty much the type of fashion I prefer as well.”
Huh…that reaction just now…Is she suspicious of me? Maybe this kind of fashion doesn’t really fit with how lame I look at school…
(She’s not, so don’t worry. If anything, I’m not the type of person who would criticize you for that, so it’s all good. Now, let’s go to the cinema~)
After that, Miena continued to give me adequate advice and information, so the way to the cinema was comfortable and pleasant. Because Himeno Miina was filled with Miena-ness today, it was easy for me to talk to her.
The cinema we targeted was located on the second floor of a three-floor large shopping mall. Because it was like any other Sunday, the inside of the mall was filled with families with children. The voices of the children made me realize that despite this being an irregular situation, I was still in the middle of reality.
Looking at the other customers at the cinema and around, I saw couples flirting that stood out immensely. Maybe Himeno Miina and I also look that way? My heart’s racing just at the thought of that. In front of the ticket machine, Himeno Miina and I lined up next to each other.
“It’s been a while since I went to watch a movie, I’m feeling a bit nervous now. Also, what movie did you have in mind?”
I realized I had never even asked about which movie she wanted to see, so I voiced this honest question.
“This movie.” Himeno Miina pointed at the display.
“Oh, that? Sounds interesting. I was trailers for that a while back.”

Normally, I would just rent the movie and watch it at home. It's at least cheaper than going to the cinema and watching it there. However, today is different. I understand the feelings of the people who come to the cinema. Of course, the feeling of being in the middle of the movie is one thing, but there's also the part of you flirting with your lover.
(Oh yeah, that's the popular Hollywood movie, right?)
Sounds fun, alright. That's Himeno Miina's choice for you.
(It's running for two hours. Personally, I'd prefer the movie that's running in the other cinema. You know, that anime. Well, whatever. I can just watch it once I'm back to my main body.)
W-What!? Why didn't you tell me about that sooner!?
(What? The screen time?)
No! What you said after that! Miena, you'd rather watch that anime instead of the Hollywood movie!?
(Eh? Y-Yeah, I do. A popular gal game is the source material after all, and it got a TV anime. This TV anime ended up as a big hit, so they made it a movie even. Of course I was a fan ever since the source material, and—)
"W-Wait a second!"
"Hm? What's wrong?"
Right as Himeno Miina was about to enter the movie to buy the tickets, her hand now stopped because of my outburst.
"Sorry! I-I actually would rather watch that anime instead…Would you be okay with that?"
(—there was nothing to criticize with the anime either, so…Wait! Itsuki-kun, what are you talking about!?)
"Eh, this anime!? Not the Hollywood movie?"
"Yeah, I'd rather watch that anime instead. With Himeno-san, of course."
Himeno Miina froze up because of my sudden request, just looking at me in confusion…Crap, maybe I said something weird.
(Even I'd be surprised at this. I never talked with anybody about my hobby, so knowing that you're like a comrade of mine, I probably need a few seconds to process that.)
Maybe I just ruined the mood after she already came up with a plan for our date today?
(You're worrying too much. I told you, being open about it is just fine. Of course I—)
"W-Well, the thing is, I actually wanted to watch this anime as well, but I didn't want to bore you with something you're not interested in. If you're okay with it, I'd like to watch it…together."
"Yup, that's fine, thanks! It starts at around the same time, so we're still fine."
"I should be the one thanking you. Thanks a lot…Saotome-kun."
(Geez, all this practice and simulations for nothing. I did give you a piece of information, but you're properly taking the lead.)

It really is thanks to you, Miena. I feel a bit bad for changing our plans like this, but if she's happy, then that's fine.
(She sure is happy. Look, she just raised her hair with her left hand again.)
Ohhh! That means she's anticipating something, right? Though, I feel a bit guilty for even knowing that.
(It's fine~ You worry too much. She gets to watch the movie she wants, so I'm jealous even.)
What are you talking about? I wanted to watch that movie with you, which is why I requested that we watch that instead.
(R-Really…? H-Hm…I see…thanks.)
Miena said with a bashful voice, and I didn't miss how she gently raised her left hair up with her hand. Whereas Himeno Miina gave her honest gratitude, Miena instead gave an embarrassed and flustered reaction.
Seeing the differences between the two, I couldn't help but smile. It's all thanks to Miena that I could be like this. I'm glad I worked hard to understand her.
"Then, let's wait over at that sofa until the movie starts."
"Ah, before that. Let me pay for my ticket. Here."
Since Himeno Miina operated the terminal before, naturally she used her own money to buy the ticket. I should at least pay for my share, so I tried to offer her the money, but…
"I can't accept that. I'm happy for your feelings though."
"N-No, I can't back down from this."
"Hmmm…I really was planning on paying from the very beginning, after all, I invited you, right? Not to mention that you picked the movie I wanted to watch."
I picked the movie she wanted to watch?
"Huh? Did you realize that I picked the anime for you, Himeno-san?"
"…Yeah. I just felt like you weren't really into watching anime like this, Saotome-kun."
"I see. But, this and that are different."
"Hmm…that's a blunder."
(One more piece of advice, Itsuki-kun. I know it sounds weird coming from myself, but I can be really stubborn, so you should probably just accept this.)
Seriously? You're saying I should stay quiet and let her treat me? I feel really bad though.
(It's fine. If anything, it's already enough that you didn't expect to be treated to it from the very beginning.)
I-I see, then…
"A-Alright, I'll gratefully accept your offer."
"Really? Thank god. You know, that attitude is much more manly, Saotome-kun. Fufu."
Holy smokes, she's smiling like a blooming flower. I know! I can just buy the popcorn instead. That means she isn't just treating me to something, but

rather that it’s a solid give & take. I’m amazing! I can’t believe some mob like me arrived at that conclusion! Alright, time to head over to the—
(Wait a second. I agree that you have a point with that, but…I don’t eat popcorn while watching a movie. The chewing noises annoy me, and I won’t be able to focus on the movie.)
Are you serious!? Ahh, my wise idea…
“I-I know that popcorn is popular while watching movies, but I don’t really like eating it during the movie, a-ahaha.”
Right as we made it to the popcorn selling place, I quickly went back on my own words…Ahh, so pathetic.
“You as well, Saotome-kun? I couldn’t agree more, the sound just doesn’t let me focus on the movie. I guess we’re pretty similar? Ehehe.”
I’m saved…Without Miena’s help, things would have gone bad, but I still can’t relax just yet.
(You don’t need to go along with my preferences, you know? My real body already said it, but since I invited you, you can just act as you’d like.)
I’m watching a movie with the person I admire as the three of us, being a bit considerate is normal, right?
(Three, huh…Well, I bet the person you admire is the one grinning over there.)
Don’t get hung up on the smallest things. Also, just look at her? Her smile’s so cute.
(Yeah yeah, she’s so cute. Though, I didn’t expect her to be this honest.)
Well, she is being herself after all.
(Isn’t it because you made so much progress over the past few days, Itsuki-kun? Of course, she’s pretty easy of a heroine, but it’s amazing that you moved through so many events that smoothly.)
Yup, thanks! I don’t really get it, but at least it seems like I’m doing well. I feel relief in the face of that. Well, from my point of view, I’m on a date with two girls I like at the same time. This doesn’t feel like it’s in reality, but rather that I’m just playing some game. I might have been acting a bit unnatural so far, but this is where I’ll take the lead.
“The screening is about to start, let’s head over.”
You can enter the specific cinema room about ten minutes before the screening begins, and the announcer just let us know about that. Once the movie started, both Himeno Miina and Miena were focused entirely on the movie. Yeah, I’m glad I didn’t buy any popcorn. After the screening ended, and we returned to the sofa, we exchanged our impressions.
(Mmm! The scene where the protagonist’s feelings clashed with the heroine was great! That was even better than in the source material! That must have been hell to animate.)
I agree with the first part, but I had no way of knowing about the second. All I could tell is that it was well-adapted to the point where a newcomer to the series could understand it. Maybe I should play the game sometime.

(Right right!? I don’t mind lending it to you, but you really should buy it for yourself. Once we go back, I’ll tell you why this movie was so great as an adaptation!)
…Also, why am I just exchanging my impressions with Miena!? Himeno Miina is sitting right next to me!
(Hmpf, she seems to be thinking about something herself, so just leave her alone.)
“Himeno-san, how did you like the movie?”
“Hm? Y-Yeah, it was fun. Did you enjoy it yourself, Saotome-kun?”
“Yup! I had no idea about the source material, but it was a blast! Especially the scene where the protagonist revealed his feelings to the heroine was amazing.”
“I’m glad to hear that. I also really liked that…Ah, right. Saotome-kun, could you wait here for a moment?”
She suddenly stood up from the sofa, and walked away. I wonder where she’s going?
(There’s something more important than exchanging her impressions from the movie? …!? Ah, uhm, yeah, you don’t need to think about that, Itsuki-kun.)
What, you know where she went?
(I think so…You know…she’s answering the call of nature…What are you even making me say!?)
I have no clue…Well, whatever, She told me to wait, so I’ll do just that. I’m not in a rush or anything. Miena and I exchanged some more impressions about the movie, when Himeno Miina came back—holding a pamphlet.
“Sorry for making you wait.”
“What’s that pamphlet about?”
“It’s a pamphlet for the movie we just watched. It has differences compared to the source material pointed out, as well as some additional information they couldn’t add in the movie!”
Seeing Himeno Miina energetically talk about the movie was adorable. And, Miena taking glances at the said pamphlet with a deeply curious expression was just as cute…Ahh, such a happy time this is. If only this continued forever. Once I let down my guard like that, the weakness inside my heart reared its ugly head at me.
…I can’t. This time is nothing but a hallucination. My relationship with [Her] is not complete. She’s missing a piece of the puzzle. Not to mention that it’s a very large one. I want Miena to smile like the girl in front of me does. I want to see her that way. I want us to stand face-to-face, in the tourist sense of the word. I want to hear her gushing about the movie with my own ears.
I’ll make them turn back to normal. I’ll save both of them. If I let myself sink deeper into this happiness, I might lose both of them, and I won’t be able to live with that. I need to bring an end to this. And for this, I need to make it into the ending of this route—

“Huh~? Isn’t that Hime? What are you doing here?”
…However, that didn’t work as planned. Right as we left the cinema, we ran into a group of three girls that visibly stood out from the people around them. They seem to be friends of Himeno Miina, since they called her Hime.
“Ah, Shiraishi-san…Kii-chan and Mei-chan as well.”
(Wah, the timing couldn’t be worse for this…)
Shiraishi-san!? So they’re the trio that’s always with Himeno Miina? They were all wearing casual clothes, with faint makeup on, so they gave off a vastly different impression compared to how I knew them at school. Then again, I never have anything to do with them, so I didn’t pay much attention to them.
(They’re not my group or anything. What’s trio supposed to mean!? Am I some last boss and they’re my lakeys?!)
Who cares about that right now. The problem is that Himeno Miina and I were seen together at the cinema, so I’m worried they might get the wrong idea.
“Hime-chan, who’s that guy next to you?”
One of the girls in Shiraishi-san’s group closely inspected me.
(That girl is Mei-chan, and the other is Kii-chan. They both were there when you tried to invite my main body for lunch, remember?)
Oh yeah, that girl. I remember now, as well as all the pain I felt.
“Um, well…” Himeno Miina wasn’t sure what to say in the face of Mei-chan’s question.
If anything, she seemed to be panicking.
(What am I doing? Just introduce Itsuki-kun!)
“Hmmm? I feel like I’ve seen him before…” Kii-chan tilted her head, and tried to trace back her memories.
Is it that hard to remember me?
“Itsuki-kun is…” Himeno Miina probably wanted to respond, but couldn’t.
I can’t blame her, someone at the bottom of the school caste…a mob lowest in the school hierarchy would not even be in their minds for a split second.
If so…
“H-Hello, nice to meet you. My name is Saotome Itsuki, and I’m in class 5. I’m Himeno-san’s…f-friend!”
I had to introduce myself. My accent or smoothness when it comes to conversation doesn’t matter. I just have to make sure there’s no weird atmosphere going on.
“Ehh! Hime had male friends!? We didn’t hear about this at all, though?”
The boss of the group, Shiraishi-san, showed a bewildered reaction.
I could also feel a faint pressure coming from her. A member of their group went off meeting with some random guy, so from their position, the constellation of the group is being shaken here. Miena previously told me that a friendship between girls is something very complicated to keep.
(Friends, huh…)
Oh? Should I have said lovers instead?

(What even are friends?)
You're ignoring me? Cool.
(Can you really call my main body your friend if she can't even properly introduce you after you watched a movie together?)
Leaving me aside, there's at least no mistaking it that Shiraishi-san and the other two are Himeno Miina's friends, they're always together after all.
(Not wrong, but I never heard them be honest with me before. So at times like these, I wouldn't know how to react. No doubt that my real body is confused right now.)
As I've been a mob for a long time, I'm somewhat used to awkward encounters outside of school. Though, during these times it was only me, and I wasn't with someone else. For example, during the party after the graduation ceremony in middle school. I didn't feel like participating and went home on my own, when I ran into a classmate.
Or, back during a class reunion. When I ran into some classmates from my former middle school in the middle of town, I gave a slight bow and tried to walk away, when I heard words like 'Did we call him?' 'No, we sure didn't' 'Why is he even here then?' and so on. It was an unexpected encounter, with me as the victim. Either way, it was awkward. Both of these incidents happened in the past year.
(That is some strong mentality you have there. I would have probably blanked out.)
I bet she never experienced something like this. That's why I have to take the lead here.
"I-I've been spending some time with Himeno-san recently!"
"Seriously!? Hime's going around with some boring guy like you, that's hella funny!" Shiraishi-san pointed at me, and laughed.
Damn you…thinking you can say whatever you want just because you're a bit popular…! I know that I'm boring so I can't say anything against that, but at least don't pull Himeno Miina into this!
"Itsuki-kun is…well…"
(She's only been saying that for a while now! Why am I not speaking up!?)
"Hime, is this some kind of punishment game you were forced into?"
"……"
Asked by Kii-chan, an awkward silence came from Himeno Miina. This atmosphere can't just be pushed aside with a joke about her being bugged. Of course, there are times where she went silent when talking to me, but this and that are different. Rather than being bewildered, her gaze dropped to the ground like she was hurt.
(Itsuki-kun, I'm sorry…this is who I really am. Pathetic, right? Not being able to face the people talking to me, only witnessing how things important to me get hurt…)
Just like Himeno Miina did, Miena directed her gaze at the ground. Hell no! You're not pathetic in the slightest. Don't just pull Himeno Miina's way of

living and achievements through the dirt! I still admire Himeno Miina, so I won't allow anybody to speak badly of her, not even you, Miena.
(Itsuki-kun…)
"Not to mention…what's this pamphlet? From a movie, right?"
"Hime, what's that~ An anime! Gross?"
(Urk! Grrrrr!)
It seems like Shiraishi-san's target of attack changed from me to Himeno Miina now. However, that attack seemed to be more effective on Miena than anybody else.
"This anime is…"
Himeno Miina showed an expression filled with both sadness and anger, as she tried to give a response. Normally, Shiraishi-san would act as Himeno Miina's support. Considering her boss-like disposition and personality, she probably saw this as a situation to get above Himeno Miina, which is why she's on the attack now.
In their world, a mob like me never had any place. What they think of me doesn't matter. There's one thing I need to prioritize here. What's truly important to me is Himeno Miina, who is also Miena. I won't allow anybody to hurt her. Like hell I care about them, or playing along with their nonsense!
"T-T-This anime…I chose it! I wanted to watch it together with her! I-I-I-I like it after all!" I almost screamed in desperation.
Worst of all, I didn't even really think about what I was saying, just blurting out what came to my mind.
(Eh? …Ehh!? Ehhhhh!)
"Eh? …Ehh!? Ehhhhh!"
Miina and Miena showed a perfectly synchronized reaction.
"W-What are you suddenly screaming for like that…Gross."
Shiraishi-san's arrogant attitude from before had vanished, as she was now looking at me in displeasure. I don't care if they look down on me. I've been living my life not bothering what other people think about me. I did this myself, so I'm fine with it…However! I won't forgive anybody who treats Himeno Miina in any derogatory way. Even if you're friends in the same group, even if it's my good friend or childhood friend, or even her own mental entity, I won't let anybody make fun of what Himeno Miina holds dear. So, you won't silence me!
(Itsuki-kuuun…Uwaaaah!)
"Eh, this guy likes Hime?"
"Ehh, Hime, you should probably run away, you know~!"
However, both Mei-chan and Kii-chan failed to grasp any of my intentions, and seemed to have some kind of misunderstanding. Well, it's not really a misunderstanding either, but I need to clear that up!
"Ah, no, I was saying that I like the anime, not—"
(You don't have to deny it…)
I heard Miena mutter behind me.

“Hime~ You should probably pick your men a bit more carefully, okay?” Shiraishi-san gave me a scornful glare, and walked into the cinema while spitting poison at me. And then, the other two followed suit, disappearing inside the cinema. What, they came here to watch a movie as well? …Or so I thought, but one of the girls came back towards us. I think her name was Kii-chan?
(It’s Mei-chan.)
“Hey hey, tell me the name of that anime you watched, Hime-chan. I feel like watching it myself some other time!”
“……Eh!? Really!?” Himeno Miina’s large eyes opened even further, as she blinked in confusion.
(You’re kidding, right…Mei-chan is interested in anime!?)
When Himeno Miina told her the name of the anime, Mei-chan returned to Shiraishi-san and the other girls. It seems like they weren’t just her blind followers.
(She never showed any interest in anime, so why…)
Maybe she did, but just never really showed it? You never talked about it either, right?
(…Yeah.)
Who knows, maybe she shares your hobby Miena?
(I can’t believe it…)
They treated me like trash, but for Himeno Miina, I bet it must have been an important first step.
(You’re right. But, you ended up in the middle of the crossfire.)
Don’t you worry, I just did what I wanted to. No matter how they treat me at school, I won’t regret anything.
(Itsuki-kun…You changed so much in such a short time…)
Really? Sure doesn’t feel that way.
(Fufu, it’s fine. Once I get back to my main body, I’ll make sure to be your ally, so don’t worry!)
As the exact opposite of the reassuring Miena who gave me a thumbs-up, Himeno Miina seemed mentally exhausted.
“Phew.”
She must have been tense this entire time, as a faint sigh escaped her lips.
(What do you mean ‘Phew’, huh? Because you couldn’t get a grip, Itsuki-kun had to…Geez!)
“Are you okay?”
Leaving aside Miena, I’m a bit worried about her mental state.
“Thanks for just now. You were protecting me, right? You’re amazing, Saotome-kun, openly stating your feelings like that.”
“That’s not true at all. If anything, I’m worried that they might spread weird rumours now…Sorry.”
“All good, all good! Ehehe.” She showed me a bright smile.
“…Okay, I’ll take it.”

I’m really glad. If this acts as a trigger for her to make a true friend, then I couldn’t be happier.
“But, it’s not good that they have this misunderstanding about you, Saotome-kun. I’ll make sure to properly explain it to them at school, so don’t worry. I’m your ally after all, Saotome-kun!” Himeno Miina gave me an energetic thumbs-up.
Seems like she’s back on her feet as well.
(I-It’s not even a misunderstanding…this woman really has no clue…)
“T-Thanks…”
Since her appearance overlapped with Miena for a second, I was taken aback.
(You really grew a lot, Itsuki-kun. Have you realized it? Even when you’re talking with the real me, your heart isn’t racing as much anymore. You’re much more calm.)
Hm? Ahh…yeah, right…
(You’ve become a proper protagonist who can now conquer his heroines! We won this gal game for sure!)
…No, that’s not it, Miena. Yesterday, I realized my own feelings. It’s true that Himeno Miina is special, but even more than her, towards Miena I feel…
(Just now, I was panicking, but your heart was as calm as now.)
It’s the protagonist’s job to protect his heroine after all.
(…Yeah. It’s just as Rion-chan said.)
Hm? What about Rion?
(N-Nothing! But, I oddly feel refreshed now.)
Maybe it’s because you properly stood tall with your own feelings, clashed with another person, and managed to still keep your relationship? At the very least, you have the chance to build an even more profound relationship. At the same time, I also felt like a gloomy feeling inside my chest has cleared up. If you really want to get along, sometimes you can’t avoid directly clashing with the other person.
(Yeah, you’re right. I’ve been starting to feel that way myself.)
…Almost like the protagonist just now.
(If so, then why don’t you reveal your own feelings now?)
Eh!? M-Me? Towards who!?
(The heroine standing in front of you, of course.)
Huh!?
(Right now, you should be able to touch her.)
Ah, I-I see. That was our final goal after all…Though I feel like we’ve been pretty close already…Also, is it just me or are you rushing things a bit?
(I just want to hurry back to my main body. Today, all these feelings I had, I want to make them grow, and I can’t wait any longer.)
Yeah, that makes sense. Surely you would want to hurry back to your main body. As for me, I can’t help but…feel a bit lonely. A bit? No, that’s a lie. I

don’t want Miena to know of these feelings, which is why I’ll keep them locked away deep inside my chest.
(Nothing’s being locked away, you know?)
Ugh!? Damn it, so the stronger I feel the more apparent it becomes!?
(Do you still not understand the reason I want to hurry back to my main body, you dense gal game protagonist?)
I feel like I’m being dissed again, but…whatever. Also, just to confirm it one last time, even if you return to your main body, you will keep your memories, right!? The time and memories we share together won’t just vanish, yeah!?
(You don’t need to panic like that. I’ll just return to my main body, that’s all.)
How do you even know? Maybe your instincts as a mental entity? I can only believe in that, because worrying won’t help anybody…Alright, I’ll do it. It doesn’t have to be on those stairs at school, right?
(Any place is fine.)
I-I see…I just couldn’t help but think that maybe the mood and situation are important.
(I mean, the mood is important, but the me right now probably doesn’t really care.)
Mood? Me right now?
(Oh yeah, when I said touch, I was talking about a kiss.)
I see…a kiss. That makes sense…
(It will probably be the first kiss for my main body. Then again, we share the same sensations right now, so we’re pretty much kissing the same person. It’s not exactly how I wanted my first kiss to be, but it can’t be helped. Just get it over with.)
I see, that sounds troublesome……Wait, a kissssssssssssssssssssss!? No no no no no not happening not happening not happening! I can’t clear this gal game, you hear me!?

Chapter 5: This Is My Heroine Conquest Method

My field of view was white. I was gazing up at the familiar roof of my own room, with stripes running along the wood. Right now, I was resting in my bed, fully focusing on my consciousness. The center of my thoughts are of course the ‘contact’ with Himeno Miina. A **few weeks have passed** since I heard of the method that should return Miena back to her main body, but I still can’t fully grasp it.
(I wonder just why exactly we haven’t made any progress ever since that date event?)
Miena put one hand on her waist, asking a question that was clearly intended to blame me. Even after that date…that event, I’ve been getting closer and closer with Himeno Miina, but the whole plan of returning Miena I just somehow put aside. Before I even was fully aware of the passage of time, the day of the culture festival drew closer, now happening tomorrow. My motivation towards conquering Himeno Miina fully diverged onto the attraction our class would do at the culture festival. If I didn’t do that, I would have probably broken down entirely…
(You’re returning to a good-for-nothing protagonist again. The atmosphere was so good midway through, so why?)
Don’t be ridiculous. I thought that touching her meant holding hands or something like that. A k-kiss is just too hard for me!
(So holding hands would have been easy, huh?)
Sorry, I didn’t mean it that way, I apologize.
(……Geez.)
Miena let out a displeased sigh. Also, are you fine with this? K-Kissing me, and all that…
(Since I can’t turn back without a kiss, there’s not really much to say. If you aren’t doing it, then I’m lost here.)
What a business-like attitude as always, huh. Isn’t this your first kiss? Wouldn’t it be better to…you know…treasure it some more?
(I-I can’t help it, I’m just like a ghost right now.)
If you return to your main body, the kiss with me…will be inherited by you as well, right? Not to mention, ignoring Himeno Miina’s feelings for my own convenience…I can’t do that. This isn’t a problem of me not having any

willpower or guts, it's just that I want to respect the other person who is so important to me.
(What are you trying to act cool now? Both my memories and my real body's feelings are all a-okay, I can guarantee that.)
You said that before, only for me to fail miserably, remember. Regarding this case, I can't act without any ground or basis, you know?
(This guy…did you realize already and now just keep forcing me to say it? If so, then that's one hell of a strategy….No, you're a scummy bastard!)
What did I do now? Even if I disregard your feelings now, the real problem is Himeno Miina herself, as well as how she feels about it. I'm sure that the heroine conquest you mentioned was the best possible choice. After all, the real goal is to go out with Himeno Miina, and achieve it that way.
(You don't need to go that far. Simply talking to her is a success in our conquest.)
It seems like your perception of success is different from mine. The kiss is the goal, right? That's why, we need to become lovers first.
(Normally, yeah. However, if it's me, then…you know, a difference in usual order is, uhm, no problem either.)
That sure sounds awful. Are you actually just a bitch, Miena?
(How rude! I-I'm not fine with anybody, you know! If it's Itsuki-kun, then… you know…**Mumble mumble**.)
If it's me?
(Can you stop being a dense protagonist for one second!? Anyway, if you don't do it, then this situation won't change. There's no other person who can return me to my main body! Do you get it now!?
I feel like I'll get punched in the face the second you're back, you know. But, you're not wrong. We can't have things stay like this. I've been using these past few weeks to get my feelings under control, and now made up my mind.
—Tomorrow at the culture festival, I'll bring an end to this. I'll conquer my heroine!
(Finally acting like a true protagonist, I see. The culture festival definitely is your best chance. If I was the player, I'd aim for the culture festival myself.)
As always, Miena was reassuring me with her words. However, her real body had started to act off compared to when this incident first happened. This change probably points at the approaching time limit. With my kiss, I can save someone precious to me. That's all that matters, I can always apologize and beg for forgiveness later.
(Itsuki-kun, let me give you a word of my honest feelings. I'm lonely thinking about going back to my main body, and I'm also afraid. But, as long as I stay like this, there are many things I can't do. By living together with you, I've gotten to experience countless things I would have never imagined, but at the same time, I also feel irritated. If I was there…If I was there with you…if it was me…if I had been there…and so on, these frustrating feelings just keep piling up.)

…Yeah, you're right. I can't be enjoying this happiness right now. You have your own happiness, and without returning to your main body, you won't be able to achieve this.
(Until now, I was only living isolated with my view only on the ground. Now, I got to take a closer objective look at myself as a human being. It's all thanks to you, Itsuki-kun. I want to use these experiences, and live off them once I'm back.)
You better, alright!? You definitely won't lose your feelings and memories right now, okay!?
(Yeah, it's fine. Don't worry.)
It's fine, don't worry—I often heard these words from Miena. Today, they wouldn't leave my ears at all.
I must have fallen asleep at some point. When I came to my senses, it was already morning, at around 6am. It seems like my habit of waking up at 6am was engraved in my body now. As for the reason this habit existed in the first place…
(…Mm……Nnn…)
Miena still seemed to be sound asleep. I guess I woke up before her, which should be a first. I decided to enjoy Miena's sleeping face for a while. Faint breathing escaped her lips, as she rolled around. I would have loved to enjoy this wonderful time a bit longer, but Miena's eyes slowly opened.
(…Mm…Good…morning?)
She greeted me with a voice about to disappear. It was a grave difference from the usual energetic Miena. With her eyes all over the place, it almost felt like she wasn't even looking at me. Morning! It's morning, so get some groove going! Are our positions reversed all of a sudden?
(…Eh? Y-Yeah, right…)
Even when I was poking fun at her, Miena's response was faint, without any energy. Normally she'd immediately throw a complaint back at me. What's wrong? Didn't get much sleep?
(Sleep…? Um, where is this…?)
Miena's consciousness still seemed a bit cloudy, as she looked around the room. This? It's my room, dummy.
(R-Right…you are…Itsuki-kun, yes…Hm? Am I still half-asleep? My head feels fuzzy…)
Something's off. She's definitely not teasing me. Hey, you okay!? You're different from usual.
(Sorry, sorry…Yeah, I'm fine. I guess I just overslept and was a bit above the clouds.)
She stuck out her tongue, smiling innocently. If something weird's going on with your body, let me know right away, you hear me?
(I'm totally fine~ More importantly, we're going to end the heroine conquest today, right? Don't worry about me, just finish it off with a clean cut, okay?)

…Yeah, leave it to me. Hearing these words from Miena, I couldn’t help but grow a bit sentimental. Today will be the last time I will wake up together with Miena. I really wish I could have heard my favorite heroine’s alarm one more time.
(I’m not your alarm!)
How many more times will we get to exchange these words, I wonder.
(……)
Don’t just go all silent on me.
(…Then, once I returned to my main body, should I come wake you up?)
That’d be the best. Being able to enjoy Himeno Miina’s face right after waking up, there’s no better feeling.
(I’ll play the caring childhood friend for you. Then, you should understand its charm as well.)
Guess I’ll have to quickly conquer my heroine, huh.
(Don’t say that. It’s important of course, but you also need to enjoy the moment the most when you actually achieved that.)
I want to enjoy this moment together with you, Miena.
(Of course, I’ll be watching this final scene with you. If I suddenly bug out at the very last minute, make sure to send a complaint to the developer.)
You’re the person who created this gal game, remember? Well, that’s actually not true, we both made this together. At the very least, that’s what I think now. I don’t know if it was a success or not, but the person who made it had fun, so that’s all that matters. I always wished to break free from my boring and mundane daily life, but it’s not like I suddenly became an interesting protagonist. I’m still a mob in someone else’s story. Yet, for the first time ever, it felt like my decisions matter. A protagonist is someone who grants courage to others. Right now, I can’t even do that, but I have someone close to me who helps me put that into practice.
A support character? No, she’s more like a master to me, as well as—my main heroine. As all these feelings filled my chest, I could feel my motivation shake. If I give in to my own selfishness now, I’ll only regret it later. What’s important isn’t the past, or the present. It’s the future. And for that, I’m willing to fight.
A few hours have passed since the start of the culture festival.
“Itsuki-nii, sorry!”
I was rammed by Himari, and fell backwards onto the ground.
“Ouch ouch ouch…”
It seems like Himari still doesn’t quite know how much skinship is too much…This damn child of a middle school student.
“Ahh, Itsuki-nii’s face turned all slimy…”
The soft ice cream Himari held in her hand beautifully handed in my face.
“Himari…the soft ice cream can’t be helped, but at least don’t try to push a conversation in this situation.”
The other students around us are watching as you sit on my stomach, you know! Is it just me, or are they readying their torches and pitchforks!?

(Staaaaare)
Also, please let Miena's 'Switch with me' stare be just my imagination as well!
"Itsuki, what are you playing around here? Shouldn't you help out at our class?"
As I was playing—Excuse me, warning Himari, Rion appeared, wearing her tennis club uniform.
(So this is the true power of a childhood friend & uniform combination…!?)
Who was it again that complained when I was getting excited at Himeno Miina's gym clothes?
(I can't even hope to compare to Rion-chan!)
Well, you're not wrong. It is a sight to behold.
"Yeah, I'm fine. Shouma is taking over for me, I got free time right now."
(Shouma…kun? Um…who was that again?)
Hey now!? Are you still half asleep!? He's the best friend character.
(…Ah, r-right! Shouma-kun, I remember!)
Are you really okay? You've been weird ever since this morning, I feel like.
(More importantly, if you have free time right now, why not have some fun with Rion-chan and Himari-chan? You won't get a chance like this if not for a gal game!)
There, the usual Miena came back in an instant.
"T-Then, come to the tennis club's exhibit. We're making soft ice cream in the courtyard."
Damn it, so this cursed ice cream came from Rion's tennis club.
"Yeah, I'll stop by later."
I can't get excited because of the culture festival atmosphere. Today, I have an important mission.
(This is the moment where you should be walking around the culture festival with Rion-chan! What are you doing!?)
What we set out to do!? You know, conquering the main heroine!?
(…Ah, that's right, tehe~)
I know I was the one who threw a retort in, but I'm glad that she's back to the usual Miena. Maybe she's just a bit bewildered in the face of this big event.
"Say, Itsuki…you seemed a bit down lately, but you're back on groove today, huh?"
Right as I was glancing at Miena, Rion's words pulled me back to reality…I guess she was worried about me.
"Well, today's a very special event…see."
"It's the long-awaited culture festival after all! But, is walking around with ice cream splattered over your face that much fun? Come over here."
Rion approached me, and took out a handkerchief to wipe the cream off my face. Doing that in front of other people is a bit embarrassing…
"Thanks a bunch."
(See! A childhood friend is the best, right!?)

I don’t really know about that, but I sure do have a great childhood friend.
“…I don’t know just what is troubling you right now, but you can always come talk to me, you know? I do understand a woman’s heart! I am…a woman after all?”
No clue why she emphasized that last part.
(Rion-chan…once I’m back to my real body, I’ll win you over in no time, don’t you worry.)
“Thanks, Rion. Let me also give you some advice. It’d be best if you don’t get too close to Himeno Miina. You probably don’t go too well together.”
(Hey! Don’t lower my chances!)
“Eh, really? I don’t really think so…O-Of course, I do have a thing or two that I think about her, but…I think we can get along just fine!”
(Rion-chaaaan! I can’t believe it…I apparently managed to conquer her without doing anything. That’s just like me, the childhood friend killer! Heh heh heh.)
Weird, I really feel like these two never really got into contact with each other.
(This is why gal game amateurs are so troublesome~ Even if you don’t interact with a heroine, the affection parameters gradually change depending on the protagonist’s actions.)
We’re close to reaching the ending, and yet I apparently am still a gal game beginner. However, today is the day with the most important event, so amateur or not, there’s no going back now.
(That’s what I love to hear. We’ve come this far, so there’s no need to set up a specific strategy. Just do what you feel like doing, as long as you are a proper protagonist at the end!)
Yeah, I won’t resort to any underhanded tactics. I know that we can’t waste any time, but I still want to respect Himeno Miina’s feelings, so I’ll properly meet her with my own feelings—And right as I had determined myself to do exactly that, a group of people formed in front of me.
“Ah, isn’t that Himeno-senpai? It seems like she’s walking over here.”
Just as Himari stated, I saw Himeno Miina in the corner of my view. As always, she gave off this holy radiance.
(W-What is going on!?)
Naturally, her silky maid clothes and black high knee-socks shone just as brightly.
(Why am I wearing a maid uniform!?)
A fierce and determined expression filled the girl, as she headed in my direction. I was worried that this expression might just melt away with a single touch.
(This is the first time I’ve seen myself with such a lively expression at school…)
What this wise and intelligent girl was thinking, what she was wishing for, an average guy like me has no way of knowing.
(I have no clue either…What did she come here for…D-Don’t tell me!?)

Right as Miena seemed to have guessed Himeno Miina's plans, the girl arrived in front of me.
"Saotome-kun, I'm sorry for this sudden request, but do you have some time right now?" She faced me, and asked this abrupt question.
(Awawawawa! This is bad! This is exceptionally bad!)
The people around Himeno Miina most likely tagged along or formed this audience simply because of her maid appearance. If this was the first term, I probably would have been a member of that group. Now, I'm in the position of the protagonist.
"Ah, yeah. It's fine."
I was a bit bewildered at first, but my heartbeat was still at a rational level. It is right, Miena!?
(Yeah, should be fine. But, I see…Yeah, that makes sense…)
Miena let out a sigh, almost like she had figured out what exactly her main body was planning. I would love to rely on Miena here, but I decided to be honest with Himeno Miina, and only rely on myself. Rather, this might be the perfect chance, because she went out of her way to look for me.
"Hime called out to Itsuki!? D-Don't tell me…!"
"My Itsuki-nii got stolen by Himeno-senpai!"
From behind me, I could hear Rion and Himari growling in anger behind me.
(Rion-chan, Himari-chan, I'm sorry! My real body just can't read the mood…)
Amidst the tense and awkward atmosphere, we walked down the hallway decorated with party utensils. I don't even know where we're heading, but I doubt it's class 6.
(Ahhhh…Well, this is what I would do after all…)
Miena's profile was reflected in my eyes, seeming dejected about something. Was it just my imagination, or did she look more transparent than before? I couldn't help but stare at her, as I mindlessly followed Himeno Miina. We walked down the empty classroom, and moved away from the festival noises.
"Here."
We arrived at an area with stairs not used for culture festival means, when the girl suddenly pointed down.
"H-Here?"
What? I don't get it. Why would she point at some random stairs!? …Wait, stairs? Isn't this where…
(The stairs where I fell down.)
Ahh…that makes sense. I thought it seemed familiar, but it was the beginning of everything, huh.
(…Geez. How did I forget my own personality?)
Himeno Miina's personality? I mean, she's graceful, cute, and…No, wait. Himeno Miina is Miena. Her facade and fake personality don't matter. She enjoys experiencing love in gal games, wishes to find friends who like gal

games as much as she does, and is spending her youth infatuated by gal games.
What might she be thinking in this situation…what would be the reason the main heroine, wearing maid clothes, invited the protagonist first thing on the day?
(…No, that's not it.)
It's not? I feel like you would be immediately thinking about gal game events.
(That…is true, but I never thought of myself as anybody else's heroine. I always saw myself as the player.)
Even now, I didn't understand what Miena was talking about.
"Saotome-kun, do you remember these stairs? I still remember it vividly. After all, this is where you saved me."
At the same time, I failed to grasp Himeno Miina's intentions all the same.
"You don't need to make it that big of a deal, my body just reacted on its own."
(…It really was a template event of the protagonist saving the heroine.)
"To think that I would be reenacting such a popular scene myself, I could have never imagined, hehe." With these words, Himeno Miina showed me a defenseless smile, not even trying to hide her bashful reaction.
"You mean the template development of the protagonist saving the heroine?"
"…You really know exactly what I'm feeling, almost like you could perfectly see right through me."
I could feel my heart skip a beat.
"S-Sorry."
"Why are you apologizing? I'm happy. The only person I can show my true self is you, Saotome-kun. You must have been surprised to see my personality switch this abruptly, right?"
"Yeah, I sure was."
"Fufu, just to let you know, but you're not the only one. I'm the same. The reason I decided to show more honesty is all because of you, Saotome-kun."
"Me?"
"Yup. Your attitude towards me changed as well, didn't it? Or rather, your actions. Until the second term, we never even talked with each other.
"T-That's…"
"The trigger for that was me falling down the stairs, right? Ever since then, you've approached me more and more."
I wonder, what is she trying to say? Urk, I didn't want to resort to this, but I have no other chance! Miena, help me!
(It's just as you said before. Sometimes, you don't even understand yourself that well. I never managed to figure out my real personality. In the end, I failed at conquering myself, despite being confident in my abilities.)
Failed? What do you mean you didn't understand?!

(It’s okay now. She might have gotten a step ahead of us, but if we attack first, you’ll still be the protagonist!)
This is why gal game fanatics are so troublesome. At least use proper English to…Hm? Experts?
“There’s no mistaking that I definitely changed. Though, it’s a bit different.”
“Being vague is just like you, Saotome-kun, fufu.”
Just like me? I feel like she mentioned this before. Why does she make it sound like she knows me so well? But, I’m much more curious about this situation right now.
“So, why did you bring me here…” While we talked with each other, we slowly descended the stairs.
“To me, this incident wasn’t just simply you saving me. It acted as an important event that greatly changed me.”
Yeah, it was one hell of an event for me as well, for sure. Also, hearing Himeno Miina use the term ‘Event’, I once again realized that she and Miena were the same person.
(That’s why I should have realized earlier.)
“Saotome-kun, the reason I called you here is…”
(This is bad! She’ll say it first! No! I want to be the one to say that! We’re the protagonists here!)
What have you been on about all this time? Also, I’m the protagonist right? I thought you were my support character.
(Yes, that’s right. But! We weren’t the only ones who felt that way!)
!? I see! Since you and Himeno Miina are the same person—
(Rather than being conquered, I prefer to be the one conquering!)
I see…You’re a gal game expert after all…So basically Himeno Miina is trying to conquer me!?
(No mistaking it.)
But, that would mean…She…you know, likes me, right…?
(This guy…! Now that it’s come to this, we have to act first! It’s for my sake!)
For your sake?
(I can’t bear to have my real body confess my feelings first. Even if it’s like this!)
I don’t really get it, but got it!
“Himeno-san, I actually have something to tell you as well.”
“!? W-Wait! I need to say it first!”
(Itsuki-kun, no need to wait!)
“I-I actually…”
“The thing is, there’s actually another Saotome-kun with me right now!”
“……Eh?”
(……Huh?)
I failed to understand the confession given to me, and Miena apparently was the same as me. T-There’s another me with her!? What is going on?

(Awawawa! So that's what's going on here…I never even thought of that…)
"I know that it's impossible to believe for you. I'm sorry that I suddenly brought this up only to confuse you."
"U-Um, there's another me with you right now? What's that supposed to mean…?"
"Huh? You believe me? I feel like you'd be more shocked…"
Well, I sure as hell didn't expect that. Then again, the same goes for Miena, I guess.
"I am shocked. Even more so because I know you wouldn't joke around like this."
"I mean, I do joke from time to time. But, this time I'm serious. I don't know how to really prove it to you, but…I'll just start from the beginning."
(I can guess as much…Ahh, that makes so much sense.)
Unlike me, these two were awfully come in regards to this supernatural situation. Seeing no other option, I carefully listened to the explanation.
"The mental entity of Saotome-kun next to me…or so I've been referring to him, came into existence after I fell down the stairs here. I would consider the fact that we've touched each other as the trigger for that."
Eh, she's already figured it out?
"Sorry to interrupt you, but this mental entity of me, is he with you right now?"
"Yeah, he is. Even as I'm telling you all of this, he keeps talking on and on, hehe."
(Basically, she's in the same situation as we are.)
"So, is it really me? It might sound rude, but what if it's just some hallucination?"
"That's what I thought in the beginning. On the day I fell down the stairs, I pretty much ignored him for the rest of the day. After I realized that he could hear my thoughts, we talked to each other. Thanks to that, I was forced to accept that it was really Saotome-kun, who saved me that day."
"So you didn't think it was weird to talk to a me while another me already existed?"
"Of course I did. That's why I tried coming up with an explanation for this. And starting from the conclusion, it seems to be some kind of phenomenon that can't be explained in scientific terms."
(Then why did my real body never talk to Itsuki-kun about it!)
Miena raised a voice of protest towards her real body.
"You could have just told me about it…"
"It was a problem I couldn't really wrap my head around, and…Saotome-kun's mental entity didn't like…well, you didn't like seeing me talk to you, or something like that…"
"Huh!? What am I saying!? Am I an idiot or something!?"
(That's your mental entity for you, it's a perfect replica.)
…Can you stop bullying me? And don't give me such a sharp glare.

“Ahaha, you can be quite possessive, you know, Saotome-kun. After talking to you almost every day after the second term began, that’s something I realized.”
“…Scary.”
I understand that painfully well. I bet that all my feelings are already known by Himeno Miina. My mental entity, don’t you dare have told her anything weird! Also, living together with Himeno Miina, seriously? He’s a winner in life!
(Huh, so this is a desire to monopolize. Well, I knew that. But, don’t you worry! When it comes to our bonds, we won’t lose against them. After all, we’re calling each other with our given names!)
“Oh by the way, what are you calling my mental entity? And what do I call you?”
“Eh? The same way as right now, just Saotome-kun. And, he calls me Himeno-san. What about it?”
“Huh~ Hmmm, I see? It’s nothing important, I was just curious.”
(Aren’t you feeling good now, fufu.)
Right back at you, Miena. Well, I guess it makes sense. Even as a mental entity, I can’t just suddenly address Himeno Miina with her given name. Yeah, it’s me after all!
“…The Saotome-kun next to you is saying ‘Why’s he acting so arrogant now? That jealousy is pathetic’, you know? But, he’s right.”
Waaah, my mental entity is pissing me off! Is he here? He’s here right? I’ll give him a good beating!
(Our positions might be reversed, but do you understand how I feel now? Looking at yourself, you can’t help but feel annoyed at times.)
So my mental entity is looking at me the same way? Unforgivable!
(So maybe your mental entity was at fault for my real body’s weird behaviour, don’t you think?)
Hearing Miena’s assumption, I felt an uncomfortable sweat run down my forehead.
“Do you remember when I went to your classroom during lunch break? Back then, it seemed like you were pretty distracted, but…was that because of my mental entity?”
“I’m sorry about that. You interrupted my conversation, so I happened to take a distant attitude. Not to mention that your mental entity urged me to ignore you and just go eat lunch with my friends. Well, he still is complaining right now.”
Whaaaaat!? So I myself ruined my efforts!?
“So the whole contact information exchange as well?”
“Yeah, it’s just as you guessed. He told me to definitely say no, and that nothing good would come out of me agreeing.”
How possessive can I be!? I am you, remember! Be happy that you’d get Himeno Miina’s contact information! And yet I can’t even complain.
(But, why did her attitude suddenly change?)

“Recently, you’ve started to become more honest, right? Why is that? I thought my mental entity didn’t want me to approach you.”
“Yes, he is hating it very much even now. However, he started saying that you’ve been acting weird lately. He argued that you normally wouldn’t have the guts to talk to me, let alone ask to exchange contact information.”
“I-I see~”
Of course I’d think of it as weird. It’s not like I did it only for me.
“I know that this might sound rude, but…both me and your mental entity thought that maybe something irregular was going on with you. Something about the mental entity being a part of your body, which is now plaguing you in some way. You started to interact more with me after I fell down the stairs, right?”
Hey now, this sounds oddly familiar.
(We’re a pair after all, so it makes sense we’d arrive at the same thought.)
“Irregular, huh…”
“I’m sorry, but I was worried…If I was to blame for that, then I at least needed to find a way to return you back to normal. And for that, I figured I would first need to interact with you more. In doing so, something felt off about you.”
“Something felt off?”
“Yeah. Sometimes while talking with me, you’d suddenly grow silent for no reason. The mental entity Saotome-kun figured that you were just nervous when talking to me, but it felt different.”
…H-Huh? Have I gotten crazy?
(T-There’s no doubting it, this was when you were talking with me, Itsuki-kun. I never realized, but it must have looked like you froze up from the outside.)
Oh no, so that’s why she thought of me as weird, I had no idea.
“…Ah, is it happening right now?”
“It sure is. Are you aware of it!?”
“No, I only realized after you mentioned it.”
(Huh, so that means the reason both of us went silent is the same. She was talking with the mental entity Saotome-kun in her head.)
That makes sense.
“That explains a lot of things. You asked my mental entity about my favorite movie, my favorite clothes, and so on, right?”
Thinking about it, it was weird that she knew Himari, despite not having been a student at middle school here.
(I bet mental entity Saotome-kun must have introduced her.)
“Yeah. But, you also knew about the movie I wanted to watch. Not to mention my hobby—Uhm, my interests. Why is that?”
“That’s, um…how should I explain that…”
(More importantly, does my real body know a way for us to turn things back to normal?)
You’re talking about the k-kiss, right?

“Just had a hunch. Rather than that, did you find a method that could fix things?”
“About that…I have no idea. I don’t think anybody would understand this phenomenon even if we talked to someone about it. If anything, I think it’s a miracle that you believe me, Saotome-kun.”
“Since it’s Himeno-san, of course I’ll believe you.”
(Of course, huh. Who are you comparing her to, I wonder? Still, it sure is weird. So the mental entity Itsuki-kun doesn’t know the method to fix this situation?)
…I have a really bad feeling about this.
(You probably already guessed what your mental entity is thinking, right?)
Knowing myself, I definitely would not give up on this kind of situation. Rather than spending my days in boredom as I was before, I’d probably want to stay with Himeno Miina forever. That being the case, I probably wouldn’t tell Himeno Miina the way to resolve this situation. Even more so if it involved a kiss. I wouldn’t want to kiss myself after all.
(Even though your mental entity might get erased eventually!?)
I’d probably stay with Himeno Miina until the absolute time limit. Man, I really am a piece of trash.
(That’s Itsuki-kun alright, you’re still you even as a mental entity…)
Thanks, I’ll gladly take that praise.
“I thought about it myself, and maybe we will find out something if we both return to the place where it happened.”
“I see, so that’s why you took me here today?”
“Well, that’s one part. In fact, today’s goal wasn’t simply to return your mental entity to your main body. It is the first step, but…I also wanted to tell you about my feelings!”
(…!? This is bad!)
“Over these past few weeks, I’ve built a solid relationship with your mental entity. And more than anything, I want to get along with your real body as well, Saotome-kun.”
(Itsuki-kun, that’s enough! Just kiss her!)
“Don’t be ridiculous!”
“Eh!? Ridiculous!? I-Is it…too much to ask after all…?”
“Wah, eh, no! Forget about that, I wasn’t…”
Oh crap! Since their voices are the same, I accidentally blurted that out loud!
(This is the perfect timing. It’ll seem unnatural at this rate, so now or never!)
“……”
Himeno Miina seemed a bit bewildered as she looked at my face. Why am I panicking like this, I’m so pathetic. She already revealed it all towards me. I made up my mind to bring an end to this, so if I don’t tell her anything, it’s all for nothing.
(You don’t need to act all righteous now…)

“Saotome-kun? Judging from your reaction, could it be that…”
“…Y-Yeah, it’s exactly what you think. I’m sorry I couldn’t say this before, but…there’s also a mental entity of Himeno-san next to me.” I steeled my resolve, and revealed the secret that had previously stayed between the two of us.
“I…see. I never even thought about that possibility.”
Her words sounded calm, but she was clearly shaken. Surely, just like how Miena was before.
“I’m really sorry, I should have told you earlier.”
“You don’t need to apologize, the fault lies with me. To think you were in the same situation as me…Ahahahaha.” Himeno Miina’s expression softened, and a laugh escaped her lips.
(This woman has a screw loose.)
“So, my mental entity is with you now, right?”
“Yeah, sure is. She’s worried about you, and wants to hurry back to her main body.”
(Hey, don’t you go lying about that.)
“Hmmm? I wonder about that~”
“Why?”
“This is just my guess, but I don’t think my mental entity likes me all too much. If anything, I could see myself spitting poison at any given moment.” Himeno Miina crossed her arms, and sent a sharp gaze at the area around me.
“A-Ahahahahaha…”
That’s what you’d expect from her, I guess. She really has an objective view on herself.
(I really don’t like that about myself. I just keep a calm attitude in order to hide my bewilderment.)
Miena crossed her arms as well, as her cold gaze pierced Himeno Miina.
That’s what you’d expect from Miena, I guess. She really has an objective view on herself.
“I want to ask my mental entity something. Does she know a way that could return us back to normal? No matter how I ask the mental entity Saotome-kun, he would only give me vague answers. Being together all day, I pretty much figured out his personality, and I’m guessing that he’s hiding the method from me.”
Perfectly on point, as expected.
(I feel bad for your mental entity, but you go and tell her about the kiss.)
…Yeah. Though, I’m sure she’d hate doing that.
(It’s fine. If she’s gonna complain, I’ll just make her shut up after I’m back. Even better, just do it without explaining anything.)
Heh, that’s just like you. But, that won’t do. I want to do it properly.
“I heard about the method from your mental entity.”
“Then why didn’t you do anything!?”
“The thing is…I was planning on doing it today.”

“R-Really!? Sorry, I might have done something unnecessary then.”
“It’s fine…this is something that I, uhm, need your help for, probably.”
“You’re suddenly getting tongue-tied. That’s just like the mental entity Saotome-kun, hehe.”
I guess I still am me, no matter how far I go.
(Compared to the mental entity Itsuki-kun, you’ve changed a lot, you know?)
I did? What exactly did change?
(Hehe, not telling you~)
Miena showed me a teasing smile. Only I, in the entire world, get to see this kind of smile. Not even her main body can see her. It’s my special right. As I was enjoying spending time in a world only between me and Miena, the light around us started to fade. The sun began to set. Normally, the hallway would be filled with students enjoying the last few minutes of the culture festival, but nobody was around in this empty hallway. It’s almost like only the two of us existed in this school, in this entire world.
However, that’s not correct. It’s the four of us. Around one month has passed since the second term began. It was a short time, but these days were like a miracle to me. The person I always admired suddenly became my imaginary friend, my support character, my teacher—and my main heroine. I wonder what happens in a gal game where you can’t conquer your heroine in the end. A Bad End? Return to the beginning, and choose random choices to aim for the goal?
I’m a beginner at gal games. I don’t regret the actions I took. I just proceed until the end of the game. And, that won’t change from here on out either.
(…Itsuki-kun, thank you.)
W-Where did that come from?
(You saved me, Itsuki-kun.)
What are you talking about, I’m going to save you right now.
(When you said that I could stay the way I am, I was really happy. I won’t ever forget how you told me that talking with my true self was much more enjoyable and easy than the me who put up a facade.)
Hey now, you’ll dampen my determination…
(It’s fine. It’s me we’re talking about, I’ll accept it all, so have confidence—)
No! I…that’s not…I actually…!
“What’s wrong? Talking with my mental entity?”
“…Yeah. A few last words. I need to tell her about my feelings—”
(Itsuki-kun, please! I also have countless things I need to tell you!)
…Urk, don’t you dare forget, okay!? I won’t go through this gal game again! You better let me properly conquer you as a heroine!
(Objectively speaking, I don’t think I’m fit as a main heroine. Spending time with you, I realized that. Looking at Rion-chan, I was jealous of such a pure, and truly adorable girl. Compared to that, my main body…I could only feel displeased whenever I looked at her. I was always concerned about people around me, spending my time without ever deciding on anything…)

That’s not true! Now that I’ve learned of the true Himeno Miina, I can say that. You are, without a doubt, my main heroine!
(……Yeah…thanks…!)
Same here. Thank you for everything, Miena! Thank you for shining light into my dull daily life! To me, Himeno Miina is none other than you, Miena, so—
“Himeno-san…I’m sorry for making you wait. About the method to turn things back to normal.”
I made up my mind, and was about to explain everything to Himeno Miina, when…
(Urk…Guh…!)
Suddenly Miena pressed her hands against her chest, collapsing to the floor. H-Hey! Miena!?
(I…I’m fine…My heart just started pounding.)
You don’t look fine at all! D-Don’t tell me, is it the time limit!?
(…Maybe…yeah. Ehehe, it’s getting a bit tough for me…Huff…)
Seeing Miena smile in pain like that, I felt my chest tighten up.
“Saotome-kun, is something wrong?”
It didn’t seem like anything was wrong with her real body.
“Himeno-san! Is there something weird happening with my mental entity!?”
“Hm? Saotome-kun is the same as always, right next to me.”
Why!? Why have we reached the time limit before them!?
(Urk…Huff…I think…that it’s been influenced by your heartbeat…)
You don’t need to force yourself to talk! I understood what you’re trying to say. Basically, my racing heart made the time limit approach faster…Unlike Himeno Miina’s real body, who is always calm and collected, I was nervous and excited because of the heroine conquest strategy. That would explain why there’s nothing weird going on with my mental entity.
…Shit, it’s all my fault! Miena’s body was turning transparent more quickly. Almost like she’s about to be erased from existence itself. Because of me, Miena is going to disappear!
(Itsuki-kun…Hurry…I’m fine, so please…)
The more she spoke and gasped for air, the weaker her voice got. She’s probably trying to push me forward with her last bit of strength. Don’t worry, I understand perfectly what you’re talking about. There’s no time to hesitate! I have to save Himeno Miina…save Miena!
“Himeno-san, I’m sorry!”
“Eh? W-Wait, what are you…doing…Eh, awawa!?”

I pulled Himeno Miina closer, and pressed my lips on hers. I know that this was to save Miena, but I still felt bad having to force something like this. Himeno Miina remained calm when I told her about her mental entity, but I guess even she won't be able to fully accept this. It reminded me of the time when she fell down the stairs. I wonder what the past me would think if he saw me like this, kissing the heroine I had always admired, on these very stairs.
However, nobody was watching us right now—except the setting sun, and both of our mental entities. In the corner of my view, I saw Miena, now smiling happily. Was this good enough? I asked her this question, but I didn't receive an answer, as Miena just slowly vanished. All the memories we had shared over the past month flashed before my eyes. I'm sure that my mental entity and Himeno Miina must have gained precious memories just like us. All of our memories are something irreplaceable.
I don't know how long we stayed like this. Albeit feeling regret at having to do this, I slowly moved my lips away. And then, I saw Himeno Miina's large eyes look at me.
"…W-Why…did you…"
Even someone as clever as her seemed to need a moment to process what had just happened. Normally, I would have to explain my actions right away. From someone who had no idea, this is nothing short of a crime. I knew that better than anybody else. However…however! If Miena returned to her man body, then I shouldn't have to explain anything…that's why, don't look at me with such confusion, Himeno Miina! Did Miena not return after all!? Is she still a mental entity!? Miena!? Are you still here!? Is it just that I can't see you!? If so, then please respond to me!
……
Even as I screamed inside of my heart, no response came. Only silence greeted me. There were no signs of Miena still being around. At the same time, my mental entity should have returned to me, together with its memories. However, none of that happened. Was I too late!? No, who cares about my mental entity! Just please, don't let my memories with Miena disappear! As I was unable to say anything, Himeno Miina covered her mouth with both her hands, and looked at me in shock.
"Thinking about it rationally, I understand why you did that. However…"
"……"
"Before anything, isn't it proper manners to explain everything to me? No matter what my mental entity might have told you, I am still me, remember? Ignoring my own feelings, even if it's Saotome-kun…I can't forgive that…!"
I did this under the assumption that Miena would return to her main body. In the end, it was just an ideal result we had no proof for. I should have known, and yet…
"Sorry."

“Please, give me some time to organize my feelings. I know that I myself am at fault, I still can’t fully accept this result…I’m sorry.”
“…Yeah.”
Hearing my brief response, the girl showed a somewhat saddened expression and walked down the stairs. Right after, an announcement was broadcasted over the speakers, announcing the conclusion of the culture festival, which resulted in loud voices from the students. This irregular day ended, and everything will return back to normality tomorrow.
…The heck is this. Is this a bad game in a gal game? What am I, as the failure of a protagonist, supposed to do now? I could accept it if I was simply rejected by the heroine. But, acting like nothing happened? If this was a game, I could just jump back to a previous save, and try again. However, this is reality, so that won’t work.
How am I supposed to get up in the morning without you? Weren’t we going to talk about the source material gal game of the anime we watched? Teach me some more, so I can reach the top 40 during the next exams. I can’t focus all on my own. Alone, I can’t do anything…!
The light of the setting sun slowly disappeared, as darkness filled the hallways. The girl I had spent the entire past month together with…now had completely vanished. And, this announced the Bad End of my very own gal game.

Epilogue

Ending

Maybe this light illuminating my daily life was just an illusion?
Not even bathing in the memories and aftertaste of the culture festival, I just laid down in my bed. Until yesterday, my days were lively, filled with needless gal game knowledge. Maybe that was nothing but fake, and I merely lost myself in the fantasies I always lived through? The whole mental entity thing was nothing more than some fiction, and I was just satisfying myself by averting my eyes from reality. Normally, as I was always able to differentiate fantasy and reality, I probably would have arrived at this conclusion. However, the days and memories together with Miena still remained deep inside of me, not vanishing at all.
I don't want those days to just be an illusion. Even if it's just me alone, I will not forget about them! I decided to tell Himeno Miina of my feelings the next day, and went to bed.
That night, I had an odd dream. In this dream, Himeno-san and I were smiling at each other. There's a fashionable plush toy in Himeno-san's room. When I said that it was a room that was just like her, she showed a bashful gesture, which was really cute. Also, I was surprised to know that she was bad at cooking. That's why her mother always made her lunch. But, what surprised me even more was the gal game collection in the corner of her room. When I heard that she always went to Akiba to buy them, I would have collapsed in shock if I physically could.
She mentioned that talking with her friends, which I thought she was close with, wasn't actually that enjoyable at all. Realizing that the Himeno-san I believed to be perfect was just another girl, I immediately felt a closer connection. Well, she's not just another girl, she absolutely adores gal games after all—
……Himeno-san?
It felt like something was urging me, so I jumped up from the bed. Looking over at the time, it was barely 6am. This was around the time [she] would wake me up.
"A dream…?"
…No. That wasn't a dream. They're my precious memories I treasured more than anything. They're memories from my mental entity. I remember often having a bit of banter with Himeno-san. Why was I so calm about forgetting, even though they were just as important as my time with Miena?

Himeno-san, I’m back…I’m sorry that I couldn’t keep my promise of helping you create a cafe that would make everyone happy until the very end…
Promise? Ahh, that’s right, there’s something I need to tell Himeno-san—Miena as well! Miena, you got back to your main body, right!?
Almost as if to answer my question, my smartphone vibrated. I immediately checked my messages, and found a single, new one.
‘To Saotome-kun. I have something important to talk to you about. Could you come meet me at that place today after classes?’
It’s thanks to the contact address Miena and I worked so hard to get.
Saotome-kun, huh…With mixed feelings, I headed to school.
Classes ended for the day, and I moved to the place mentioned in the message, the stairs where everything began. Our surroundings had started to turn orange, as I spotted Himeno Miina standing there. From the place I arrived, it was impossible for me to guess her expression. How should I even call out to her? I can’t be irresponsible.
“U-Um…”
I really haven’t grown at all. If Miena was here, she’d probably laugh at me. However, she’s gone, so I have to be the one to act.
“Thanks for coming.”
It’s her voice I’ve been hearing close up to me for the past month. Drawn closer by this voice, I descended the stairs. Finally, her face was illuminated by the setting sun, revealing her expression. The second I saw her expression, I was certain. There’s no mistaking it, it’s her—”
“……Miena!”
“Sao…Itsuki-kun! I’m really sorry for what I said yesterday!” She apologized, her expression looking like she was about to break out in tears.
“It’s fine. If anything, I’m just glad that your memories didn’t disappear…”
“……Yeah.” Almost as if she was remembering each and every one of these memories, she put her hands in front of her chest.
“The memories of the gal game we played, they’re inside of me.”
“Though, the game I bought at Akiba back then didn’t turn out to be so great after all…Fufu.” She tried her hardest to keep up a smile, but I could tell she was close to crying.
“You got really angry mid-playthrough right, Himeno-san.”
“…But, the other gal game was the best one ever.” She looked directly at me, declaring with confidence.
“Really now?”
I still don’t know about that. After all, I have yet to tell Miena of my feelings.
“Y-Y-You know.”
Miena said I changed, but I’m still the same. No matter what, I can’t change. I can’t even tell the person I love so much about my own feelings.
(It’s fine, it’s just me. Don’t worry.)
There, it felt like I heard a familiar voice tingle my ears. This voice must have been nothing but my imagination. And yet, it was more than enough to give me courage.

“…Yes…?”
The girl in front of me smiled, as she inspected my expression. And then, she moved her face away, raising up her hair on the left side. Meina is waiting for my words. She, who’s normally always the one to conquer. Only today, only for this moment, I’m the protagonist! I don’t mind being a side character for the rest of my life, or even just some background character. Only at this moment, I won’t let anybody else take my position as the protagonist!
“I like Miena. I like Himeno-san. **I love Himeno Miina!**”
After hearing out my confession, the girl showed a bright smile, and offered me her right hand.
“Congratulations on your successful conquest!”

Afterword

Three years ago, I lost feeling in my legs. After that, my heart grew weaker, and I had to be transported to the hospital, with me immediately being hospitalized. While resting in that bed, I was reading a light novel from Fantasia Bunko.

Having lost my legs, and still being alive to this day, I started thinking about what I could do. I was touched by this light novel, and decided to create a story of my own. It felt like starting as an author felt a bit late at my age, I still kept on writing. One year later, the pet turtle I had kept with me over the years went on a departure. It had lived a long life, but since I heard that turtles could live for thousands of years as a child, I was pretty dejected, and I still am. However, my emotions and desire to leave a story of mine behind in this world grew stronger, even if it was as slow as a turtle, and after continuing to write despite age and sickness, I happened to win a prize like this. That reminds me, turtles can actually be quite fast if they want to, right.

Nice to meet you, my name is Orikasa Yuujin. Thank you very much for picking up this book. I have been granted the Gold Prize and Aoi Sekina[1] Prize of the 32nd Fantasia Light Novel Contest with this entry novel of mine. Even winning the legendary gold prize was truly beyond my belief, but to even receive the great honor of receiving the prize named after Aoi Sekina, I have no more words of gratitude. I was thinking of trying to explain the charm and beauty of my novel in this afterword, but saying 'This story got a prize from Aoi Sekina-sensei!' would probably do the trick much faster, so I'll omit my original plans here.

Following this, I'd like to give my thanks. First up is my first editor-in-charge, K-sama. By receiving an editor for myself like this, I made my first step as an author. Thank you very much. I hope you recover as quickly as possible.

Next up, my current editor, T-sama. Thank you very much for allowing such a smooth change of editors despite the circumstances. The reason I was able to turn my amateur novel into one worthy of Fantasia Bunko undoubtedly is because of T-sama's help.

Of course, I need to give my gratitude to Aoi Sekina-sensei, Ishibumi Ichiei-sensei, Tachibana Koushi-sensei, everyone from the editorial department, and all the helpers in the selection of my novel. I may be inexperienced, and

barely standing at the starting line, but I will strive further in order to become worthy of having received this prize.
I can’t forget about my illustrator Saba Mizore-sama. Thank you so very much for all these wonderful illustrations, the characters are even more adorable than I could have ever wished for. If you hadn’t accepted to become an illustrator, I might not even have been able to publish this book, so thank you very much.
Talking about the publishing, there are countless people involved in this process. The proofreader, everyone from the publishing and editorial department…those who deliver my book into the bookstores all over the country, I could not have brought out this novel without your help, so I feel nothing but gratitude. I will not forget this feeling, and will use it to further polish my writing skills.
At the end, to all my readers, it is my duty to create something to read for you, and for giving me this opportunity, I thank you a thousand times over.
Thank you very much—
March of 2020, Orikasa Yuujin

1Gamers Author

Credits

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